

Cavalier arabe dans le sud, Armand Point, 1887, oil on canvas.

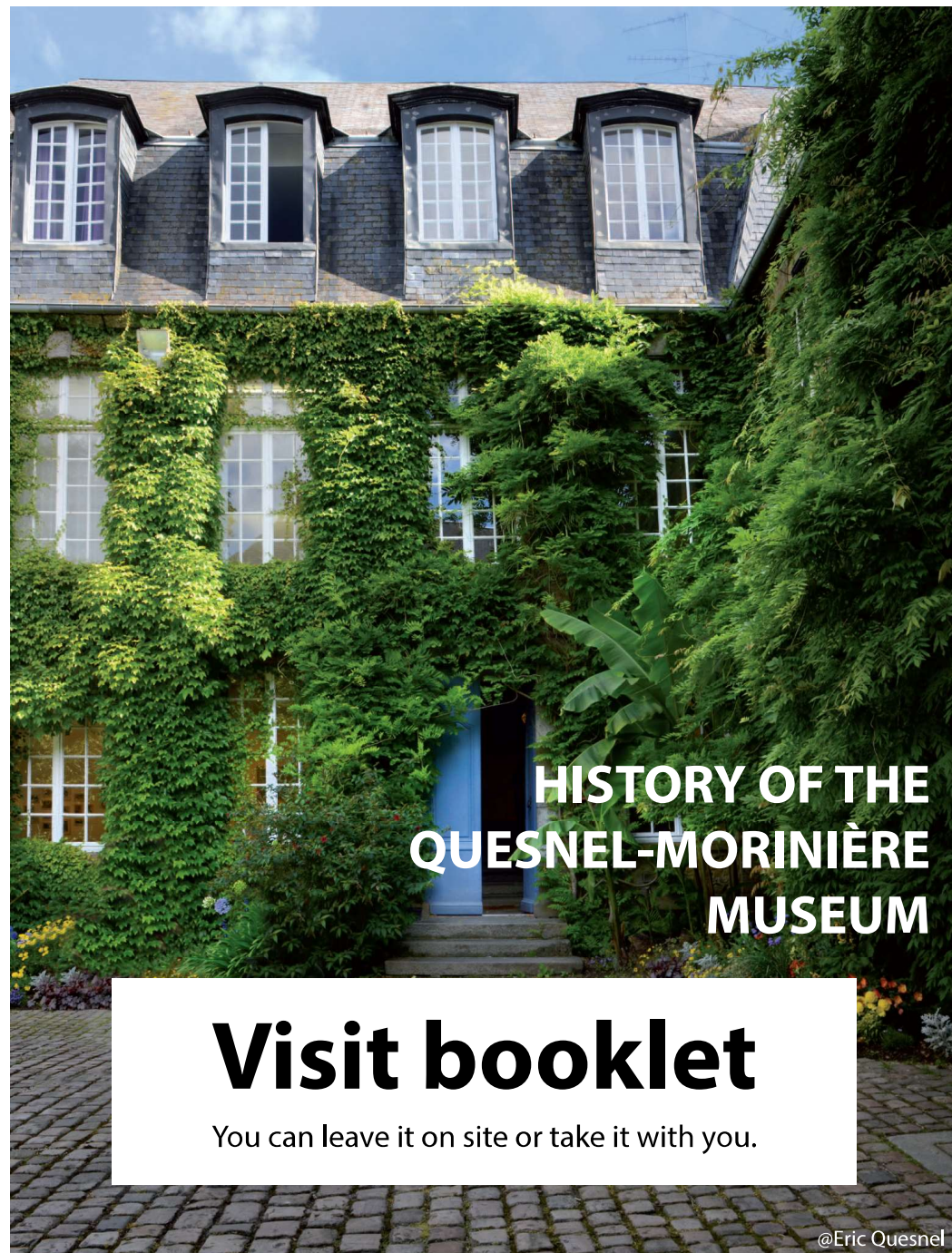
Quesnel-Morinière Museum

Open Tuesday to Saturday
2pm-6pm and Thursdays from noon

Free entry

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HISTORY OF THE QUESNEL-MORINIÈRE MUSEUM

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Some of the museum's personalities

Léopold Quenault

Born in Coutances in 1808, Léopold Quenault became mayor of the town from 1840 to 1848, then general councillor for the canton of Montmartin sur mer in 1849, and finally sub-prefect of Coutances from 1858 to 1870.

He dedicated his life to the history of Coutances and its surrounding areas, publishing *Recherches archéologiques historiques et statistiques sur la ville de Coutances* in 1862. He was also interested in the Coutances aqueduct, for which he published a study demonstrating, with the help of the town hall archives, that the aqueduct dates back to the Middle Ages and not to ancient times.

Quenault was a member of the Society of Antiquaries of Normandy and took part in the Cotentin Academic Society. He died in 1886 in Montmartin sur mer.

Basile Quesnel

Brother of Jean-Baptiste, he was born on 2 January 1813 in Coutances. A former pupil of Paul Delaroche, he became a teacher at the municipal drawing school in 1831 and then curator of the museum after the death of his son in 1892. He was also a public education officer. Basile Quesnel died on 18 December 1896.

Léon Lemuet

Léon Lemuet was born in Vendelée, near Coutances, in 1833. He was a photographer and worked for the Geographical Society. He was one of the founding members of the Cotentin Academic Society. Lemuet was also a member of the museum's commission and one of its main donors.



Guillaume Desgranges, copying the portrait of Prince Lebrun by Robert Lefevre, 20th century.

Guillaume Desgranges

Born in 1886, Guillaume Desgranges studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris before becoming a drawing teacher at the Charles-François-Lebrun high school in 1914. As a painter, he was awarded an honour medal at the French Artists' Salon in 1925. He was curator of the museum from 1914 to 1966. Around 1939, he donated several of his works to the museum.

He wrote the last handwritten inventory of the museum's works in 1939. He was awarded the Légion d'Honneur in 1961. Guillaume Desgranges died on 1 February 1967.

François-Dominique Plaine

Mayor of Coutances from 1868 to 1878, François-Dominique Plaine took a keen interest in the creation and development of the museum and was heavily involved in its creation.

Born in the small village of La Rochelle Normande in 1815, he was sub-prefect of Coutances from 1848 to 1857 and a member of the Association Normande. He died on 13 April 1892.

The museum, survivor of World War II

Two waves of bombing destroyed 65% of the town, one on the night of 6 to 7 June and the other on the night of 13 to 14 June. The first wave destroyed the Palais de Justice, the railway station and the sub-prefecture, resulting in the deaths of 250 Coutançais residents. During the second bombardment, the Parvis Notre-Dame, the rue Geoffroy de Montbray and part of the Trancrède street caught fire. The town hall, the Germain school and the high school were damaged. The lead roof of the cathedral melted under the bombs, the church of Saint-Nicolas suffered heavy damage and the stained glass windows of the church of Saint-Pierre were destroyed.

The town was liberated on 28 July 1944 by the 4th American Armoured Division, which continued Operation Cobra towards Granville and Avranches in order to reach Brittany.

The Museum today

The main building is flanked by two wings. The southern wing, which housed the outbuildings, is now used by the museum as permanent exhibition rooms. The north wing, with its former orangery, houses the museum's temporary exhibitions.

In 1987, the hotel was renamed the Quesnel-Morinière Museum by municipal decision, in honour of Jean-Jacques Quesnel-Morinière.

The museum features a rich permanent collection of fine art, graphic art, popular art and sculptures in its seven permanent exhibition rooms.

The **main gallery** is dedicated to the 19th century, with sculptures by Ernest-Hulin alongside works depicting local figures.

In the **enfilade**, also known as the **Salon Bichue**, you will find works by Robert Bichue and Joseph Vernet.



Coutances after the bombings of 1944, Gaston Karcher, Archives Municipales de Coutances, 2 Fi 50.

The museum was also affected by the bombings: some collections were damaged or even decimated (weapons and numismatics).

The **third room**, dedicated to the 17th century, features works from the French, Italian and Flemish schools.

The **graphic arts cabinet** displays around sixty artworks from the museum's collection of engravings and drawings.

The **modern and contemporary art room** features paintings by Alain Fournier, François Enault, the "Le pou qui grimpe" art movement and other local artists.

The **Norman collection**, in two rooms, includes a collection of Norman ceramics donated by Dr Stephen-Chauvet, Norman furniture, religious sculptures and objects from the archaeological digs.

The museum also has a number of temporary exhibitions highlighting its permanent collections and the local heritage.



Originally a private mansion

Probably built in the early 17th century, the mansion, which became a museum in 1875, had several owners. Built by the Rihouey family, it was sold to the Le Poupinel family, a wealthy family from Quettreville, in 1675.

During the Revolution, the mansion was confiscated as immigrant property following the immigration of its owner, Antoine-Charles-Julien Le Poupinel, in 1792. It was put up for sale, but only its gardens were bought by Sieur Laurent in 1794. The municipality moved there in 1793: its old town hall, the former viscounty, had become too dilapidated.

Following the amnesty law on immigrants, Antoine Le Poupinel got his property back in 1803. He didn't keep the mansion for long, however, selling it to François Louis Gabriel Douessey, then deputy mayor and already owner of Château de Gratot.

Jean-Jacques Quesnel-Morinière, a generous donor

Jean-Jacques Quesnel was born in Coutances on 24 April 1765. His father, Jacques-Benoît Quesnel sieur de la Boudière, was criminal lieutenant general at the baillage and presidial seat of Coutances.

Quesnel was a wealthy bourgeois and large landowner. In 1794 he married Marie-Charlotte Christy de la Morinière, with whom he had two children: Monique Zulmée (1795-1867), wife of Charles Félix d'Amphernet de Pontbellanger, and Adelphe Félicisme (1803-1845), husband of Anne Desmares.

The Quesnel-Morinière family lived in rue Milon, Coutances, in a handsome 18th-century town house (which later became the Chamber of Trades). After his wife's death in 1826, Jean-Jacques moved to rue des Cohues and sold the rue Milon mansion in 1845.

Douessey reconstituted the estate in 1816 by buying the gardens from the heirs of Sieur Laurent.

Gabriel Douessey died without issue and the town house was put up for auction for the first time on 15 September 1823. However, it was not until almost a year later, and after several bids, that the mansion was bought on 8 October 1824 by Jean-Jacques Quesnel-Morinière for the sum of 20,005 francs. The mansion consists of a main building with two wings overlooking the courtyard.



Court of the Quesnel-Morinière museum.

Jean-Jacques Quesnel-Morinière died in Coutances on 22 January 1852, aged 86. **In a will dated 1 June 1850, he bequeathed part of his estate** - those located in Coutances - **to the town of Coutances**, as well as annuities for the poor of the town and annuities for the fabriques of the two parishes. In a second will, he bequeathed his lands at La Mare (with the château built by his son) in the commune of Saint-Nicolas de Coutances to the bishopric and the major seminary.

The Campana collection

Giampietro Campana di Cavelli was a very wealthy Italian collector who was convicted for embezzlement in the management of the Roman Mont de Piété. His collection was sold to various countries. France bought 11,000 works, including antiques (Greek and Etruscan), paintings, sculptures and majolica (earthenware).

The collection, whose major pieces enriched the collections of the Louvre, was dispersed in three shipments (1863, 1872 and 1875) to provincial museums. In 1875, lots of 20 to 25 works were sent to 70 towns, including Coutances.

In 1875, half of each lot comprised works from the old Campana collection (bucchero vases, vases with overpainted decoration and Etruscan mirrors), a few works from the Durand collection (mostly black varnished vases), one or two lamps, one or two vases from the Daux



Enochoe (wine pinchet), 2nd c. - 6th c. BC, bucchero, coll. Campana.

mission in Hadrumetus, and small perfume vases from various collections.

By order of the Minister of Culture of 1st March 2023, ownership of an Enochoe, 7th c. - 6th c. BC, has been transferred to the town of Coutances. It is part of the former Campana collection, which has been on deposit with the Quesnel-Morinière Museum since 1875.

What was the museum like in 1886?

The old town house is not traditional: although it is U-shaped, the courtyard is directly adjoined by the garden and the building faces the street, with an entrance porch. The left wing (as seen from the garden) was built just before the Revolution.

In his 1885 report, museum inspector Armand Dayot gave us a brief inventory of the artworks in the museum at the time, including some sixty canvases and around a hundred drawings, watercolours, charcoals, pastels, engravings and lithographs. However, he deplored the low value of some of the paintings and their lack of frames. The inspector also added that the museum needed to get rid of certain objects relating to the physical sciences, which he felt prevented visitors from getting the most out of the paintings and statues.

Léopold Quenault, one of the main architects of the museum's creation and a member of its commission, gives us a much more encouraging description of the museum around 1880 in his *Guide de l'étranger à Coutances*:

"Although only recently created, the Coutances museum, thanks to the generosity of the State and private individuals, and to the discoveries made in the region, contains first-rate artworks"

The museum contains a bronze bust of Thorigny, for which Léopold Quenault was full of praise, a collection of paintings including a picture by Coypel, a portrait of the Duc de Plaisance by Robert Le Fèvre and a marine by Joseph Vernet, drawings (including a sketch by Rubens) and statues of musical angels, part of a 16th-century altar.

The State's deposits

Although it came late in the day, the creation of the museum was part of a drive to set up museums in provincial towns. Strongly supported by the State throughout the 19th century, and particularly under the Second Empire, this policy continued at the beginning of the Third Republic. The Coutances museum reflects the encyclopaedic nature of these provincial museums, with collections of fine art, antiquities, science and natural history.

The process of sending works of art to museums, which began under the Second Empire, continued under the Third Republic. One of the State's educational priorities was to introduce widespread teaching of drawing and to place the teaching of history at the heart of learning. As a result, the ancient collections in museums have a dual role as models of human genius in the invention of forms and techniques, and as witnesses to ancient civilisations.

In addition to these consignments of antiques, there were acquisitions at the Salon, public commissions and State purchases from artists, distributed as deposits to enrich local museums.



Le calme, Louis Paul Sauvaige, late 19th century, oil on canvas.



Jesus ressucite la fille de Jaire, Fernand Cormon, 19th century, oil on canvas.

The first paintings were deposited in the museum by decree on 30 September 1872. Thanks to the persistence of the mayor, the deputy and the support of Monseigneur Bravard, the minister sent seven paintings.

However, these paintings were in poor condition and did not arrive in Coutances until 1874: the State needed several years to restore them. As the paintings arrived unframed, the town had them framed progressively.

It was nevertheless difficult for the museum to obtain certain paintings on deposit. In the case of Fernand Cormon's painting *Jesus ressucite la fille de Jaire*, for example, a series of letters were exchanged between the mayor, Achille Boissel-Dombreval, and the Minister of Education, as well as between the mayor and the deputy, Charles Savary. Discussions began with a letter dated 20 April 1878 between the mayor and the minister. However, it was not until 24 April 1879 that the painting was deposited in the Coutances museum.

The mayor made the same request in 1880 to the new deputy, Mr Le Noël, after having written once again to the minister to ask for paintings. In November 1881, the State awarded the painting *Le calme* by M. Sauvaige.

In 1886, 15 paintings were deposited with the museum by the State.

A donation to perpetuate a name

The bequest procedure took over a year: the heirs were slow to respond to the town's requests. It was not until December 1852 that they agreed to the bequest. Finally, in a decree dated 14 January 1853, the Prefect authorised the town to accept the bequest. The bequeathed objects were taken possession of in the presence of the heirs on 26 January 1853.

On 4 February 1853, the town council decided how to implement the wishes of Quesnel-Morinière's wishes. A tomb was therefore erected, at the town's expense, in the Saint-Pierre cemetery, where he was laid to rest.



Granite obelisk in the public garden, in memory of the Quesnel-Morinière couple.

« It is my wish and desire that the object of this bequest be used for an establishment of public utility, that the gardens be public gardens [...] and that there be useful and medicinal plants for the free use of the needy [...] »

Extract from the will of Jean-Jacques Quesnel-Morinière concerning the Hôtel Douessey (future Museum).



Sépulture de Jean-Jacques Quesnel-Morinière, cimetière Saint-Pierre.

It reads: "*Jean-Jacques Quesnel Morinière his benefactor and the benefactor of the poor the grateful town of Coutances, died on XXII (22) January MDCCCLII (1852) at the age of LXXXVI (86) years*".

Despite the refusal of the heirs to name a street in honour of their ancestor, the rue des Cohues (where the bequeathed buildings were located) was renamed rue Quesnel-Morinière.

At the time, it was not yet known what would become of the town house. At first, it was used as accommodation for the caretaker of the *Jardin des Plantes* and, from March 1858, it housed the telegraph station in its southern part. As for the garden on the estate, the town turned it into a public garden in 1854, opening it in the summer of 1855.

Through his donations, **Quesnel-Morinière wanted to perpetuate the memory of his family**: with no descendants to carry on the family name (his son having died), Quesnel-Morinière was afraid that his name would disappear from memory. His wish was granted: a museum and a street now bear his name.

However, he was not without heirs: his daughter Monique Zulmée Quesnel-Morinière, widow of the viscount of Pontbellanger, and his son Adelphe's daughters (Euphémie Michel d'Annoville and Marthe Quesnel-Morinière) inherited a third of his estate.

A very long journey

As soon as Léopold Quenault took office in 1840, he envisaged a museum project in the old town hall (the former Capuchin convent). Several artists also expressed the wish to exhibit their works and objets d'art in a room. The idea of using one of the two rooms in the old town hall was mooted, and an exhibition even took place there in August 1852.

Over the years, the town has accumulated a number of artworks at the town hall. In 1853, the Duc de Plaisance donated a large full-length portrait of his father, Prince Lebrun (Arch-Treasurer of the Empire). In **1851, the Ministry of the Interior awarded the painting *Bonaparte au siège de Toulon* (Bonaparte at the Siege of Toulon) to decorate the town hall** (seen in the museum staircase), which arrived in Coutances in 1854.

Before the town of Coutances officially acquired Mr Quesnel-Morinière's mansion, a number of painters, including Colas, a history painter from Gouville, suggested using the mansion as an exhibition space, but it would be several years before this project came to fruition.



Portrait du prince Lebrun, Robert Lefèvre, 1825, oil on canvas.



Bonaparte au siège de Toulon, Rigo Jules Alfred Vincent, 1848, oil on canvas.

The Quesnel brothers, artists supporting a museum project

Under the impulse of the Quesnel brothers, the idea of a museum began to take shape. In 1865, Jean-Baptiste Quesnel donated a number of paintings, including one depicting the accession of Napoleon III, to "form the basis of a museum that would first be placed in the painted room of the Quesnel-Morinière hotel" (salon Bichue).

His brother, Basile Quesnel, a teacher at the town's art school, continued to evoke the creation of a museum. In July 1865, Coutances hosted a congress of the Association Normande (founded in Caen in 1831 by Arcisse de Caumont), during which a temporary museum of religious art collections was set up by Monseigneur Bravard, Bishop of Coutances. This short-lived museum was a great success and helped support the idea of creating one in Coutances.

In August 1868, the mayor agreed to make the salon of the Hôtel Quesnel-Morinière available for storing the town's artworks and, if necessary, to create a museum. This decision was made official in July 1869. However, little progress was made with the museum in the years that followed: the war and the fall of the Empire slowed its progress.

History of the collections

Bequests

The widow Madame Anne, Admiral Lhermitte's daughter, bequeathed five paintings and two watercolours representing the Admiral and his family to the town of Coutances in her will in 29 January 1874 (received by the town in 1884).



La famille Lhermitte, anonyne, 19th century, oil on canvas.



Moïse sauvé des eaux, Biscaino, 17th century, oil on canvas.

From the estate of the former curator of the Arsenal library in Paris, Jean-Baptiste Labiche, the mayor asked for a few works from his collection. His heiress sold him two paintings for 500 francs: *Moïse sauvé des eaux*, by Stella (or Biscaino) and *Ulysse reconnaît Achille*, by the school of Poussin, as well as a small marble bust.

Purchases

In 1882, the museum purchased several paintings, including *Portrait de dame noble* by Asselin and *Portrait de l'amiral Jehenne*, both from Basile Quesnel. The museum also acquired the paintings *Soleil couchant à Yport* and *Route du château à Valmont* by Paul Colin from M. Villedieu.



Soleil couchant à Yport, Paul-Alfred Colin, 1886, oil on cardboard.



Portrait de dame noble, François-Jacques Asselin, 18th or 19th century, oil on canvas.

In 1879, the town bought part of the Dolley museum. Mr Dolley, a grocer in Coutances, was an amateur collector and a member of the Society. When he died, his small museum was dispersed. The town managed to buy a number of archaeological objects, including terracotta weights, a bronze cortina (cooking pot) found in Montchaton, an iron helmet from the Middle Ages, vases and pottery shards.



Bust known as "Hadrian's", Anonymous, Roman period, bronze.

Forming the collections

Artworks from the city

The town deposited a number of its own artworks and that were then kept at the town hall. This was the case with the bronze bust of Hadrian, which entered the museum on 1 December 1876. The bust had been purchased from the Château de Thorigny in 1820 to decorate the municipal library.

The portrait of Prince Lebrun, donated by his son in 1853, and the painting Bonaparte at the Siege of Toulon also join the museum.

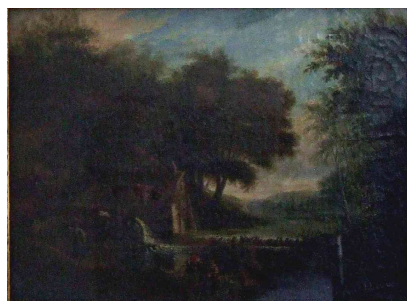
Members of the Cotentin Academic Society sought out their network of collectors in the hope of receiving donations or loans. Initially, donations were made to the Society's collection, and then to the municipal museum from 1875 onwards. Donations made to the Society consisted mainly of archaeological objects, mineralogical and fossil collections, engravings and rare books.

The donations

The first donation to the Cotentin Academic Society, made by Léon Lemuet on 1 March 1872, was an engraving of a cathedral published in Paris in 1868 by the Monrocq brothers and designed by Mr Coquet, architect.

Among the donations received by the Society are the mineralogy collections of Abbé Le Nordez and Léon Lemuet, the 18th century plates for engraving playing cards donated by Abbé Deligand, and old statues from churches in the region.

After 1875, the Society received a number of donations of engravings and paintings, including the painting *Paysage* by Watelet, donated by Mr Jeambin, and the portraits of the bishops of Coutances, donated by Mr Delisle.



Paysage avec personnages, Louis Watelet, 19th century, oil on canvas.



Coutances Cathedral, M. Coquet [arch.], Monrocq Frères [printer], 1868, Paris, Engraving on paper.

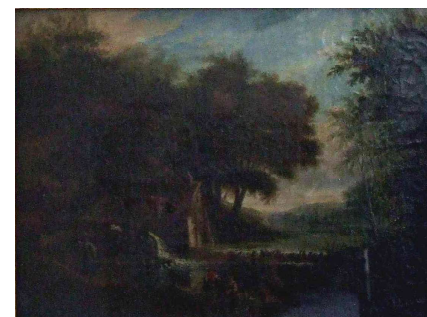
The portraits of the de la Pelleterie couple, painted by Jeanne Le Pelletier de la Pelleterie, were donated by M. Noelle.

The Cotentin Academic Society also received sculptures, such as the plaster model of the marble bust of Leverrier, donated by Arthur Le Duc in 1878.

The Cotentin Academic Society

On the initiative of Monseigneur Bravard, Léopold Quenault, former sub-prefect and former mayor of Coutances, and Canon Pigeon, **the Cotentin Academic Society was created at the beginning of 1872.**

Like all learned societies, the Cotentin Academic Society had a responsibility to create and organise a museum. At its first meeting, on 23 February 1872, its members deplored the fact that Coutances had neither a museum nor a learned society, unlike Cherbourg, Avranches or Saint-Lô. The society's articles of association state that one of its tasks will be to create a museum. Basile Quesnel, a member of the Society, went to Paris to find works for the future museum. The society also wrote to the Minister of Fine Arts to solicit donations or deposits from the State.



Paysage, Louis-Etienne Watelet, 18th century, oil on canvas. Gift of M. Jeambin to the Cotentin Academic Society.

Bishop Jean-Pierre Bravard

Born in Usson in 1811, Bishop Jean-Pierre Bravard was appointed Bishop of Coutances on 12th August 1862. Described as a "humanist" bishop he raised Mont-Saint-Michel from its ruins. He was a member of the "Association Normande" and founded the Cotentin Academic Society where he brought together a number of scholars from Coutances, including Léopold Quenault, Fierville, Deschamps Vadeville. He died on 13 August 1876.



Cent réimpressions de vieilles gravures sur bois ou sur métal provenant d'imprimeries d'Avranches, de Coutances, de Saint-Lô, et de deux grandes planches de cartes à jouer, Jean Sequin [writ.], Goves et Michaux [publisher], 1930.

The Society played a major role in the creation of a museum. Thanks to its initiatives, on 16 December 1872, the town council decided that the salon and great hall of the Hôtel Quesnel-Morinière would be used for the museum that the town proposed to create. These rooms were made available to the Society to house its collections.

Throughout the years 1873 and 1874, the Society was very active and continued to add to its collections, which were destined for its own museum.

Canon Emile-Aubert Pigeon

Canon Emile-Aubert Pigeon was one of the pioneers of archaeology. Born on 2 September 1829, he was ordained priest in 1857, but a chronic infection of the larynx prevented him from carrying out his ministry. He then became interested in historical studies.

Together with Bishop Bravard, he devoted himself to the restoration of Mont-Saint-Michel, on which he published a major work of historical research in 1865 (*Description historique et monumentale du Mont Saint-Michel, de la basilique de l'Archange et de l'église souterraine de N.-D. du Mont Tombe*). He became interested in Coutances cathedral, for which he published a work in 1875 (*Histoire de la cathédrale de Coutances*). That same year he was appointed canon. He died in 1902 in Coutances.



Le centaure, de Leduc. Postcard, Archives de la Manche / conseil dép. - 6 Fi 147-2091.

The creation of the museum

With the participation of the Cotentin Academic Society, a museum was created in Coutances. This museum includes all the artworks and antiques belonging to the town, as well as all those already owned by the society. It is and will remain the property of the town.

All the costs of setting up the museum were covered by the town. The local is provided and furnished by the town, and in return the Society helps to manage and classify the collections and expand the museum. A joint committee was also set up. It was composed of the mayor of Coutances, who chaired the committee, and six elected members: three from the Society and three from the town council. The committee is permanent (eligible for re-election every three years). It gives its opinion on many aspects of the museum (admission or rejection of objects, installation and classification of objects in the museum, etc.). It also appoints the museum's curator.

The city did not appoint a curator, instead making use of a member of the Society, Basile Quesnel. He temporarily held the post free of charge and was responsible of hanging the paintings acquired by the city.

The museum's beginnings

In the spring of 1872, mayor François-Dominique Plaine and deputy Charles Gaslonde wrote to minister Jules Simon to request works from the Louvre's reserves. The action was supported by an appeal from the Cotentin Academic Society. The decree of 30 September 1872 granted eight paintings to the museum, but only **seven were deposited**.

At the beginning of 1875, the Society was concerned about the future of the museum, while the town council wanted to organise it. An initial meeting between the ten appointed members of the Society and the town council was held on 13 February. The members of the Society made a number of requests (including a room for their meetings and to store their archives, and the provision of furniture and display cases for exhibitions).

The municipal committee agreed to these requests, subject to a number of conditions: the Society would transfer bare ownership of its museum, reserving free usufruct. In the event of the Society's dissolution, the town would be its heir.



The museum. Postcard, Archives de la Manche / conseil dép. - 6 Fi 147-2086, 20th century

The first joint committee was composed of Lepelletier, Avril and Lpesant (for the town), Léopold Quenault, Abbé Pigeon and Basile Quesnel (for the Cotentin Academic Society). The first meeting of this joint commission took place on 30 August 1875.

Le musée porte dorénavant la dénomination de « musée de la ville de Coutances ».

On 21 June 1875, the town council adopted the conclusions of the report: in a way, this was the real date of the museum's creation.

Opening to the public

At the fifth meeting of the museum commission on 26 February 1877, it was decided that the museum would open to the public on 1 April. However, as the renovations were not done yet, **the museum finally opened on 1 July 1877**.

The museum is open to the public every Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. and on the second and fourth Thursday of the month from noon to 4 p.m.

In 1878, the Salon Bichue was restored and a campaign was launched to make frames for the paintings. In 1880, the museum was enlarged from 3 to 5 rooms with the relocation of the telegraph station.

Quesnel and Quenault also intended to publish various articles in the Coutances' Journall about the opening and the artworks in the collections.

The museum's first "curator" : Léon Alfred Quesnel

Son of Basile Quesnel, he was born on 19 November 1846. First a drawing teacher in various schools, then at the Coutances high school, he became an assistant teacher at the Coutances municipal drawing school and supervisor of the Coutances museum in 1878, as well as an academy officer. He died on 31 December 1892.

Léon Quesnel was one of the museum's key figures, acting as unofficial curator from the very beginning. In June 1876, he was responsible of hanging the first paintings, in particular those from the town hall.

However, Léon Quesnel was regarded as a mere caretaker. He was already complaining about this in 1878. With no official title, Léon Quesnel was unfortunately blocked in some of his efforts to acquire new works. When he made a request to the Director of Fine Arts in Paris in 1886,

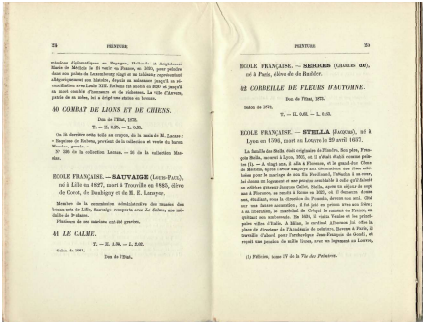


Le retour de la pêche, Joseph-Marine Vernet, 18th century, oil on canvas.

Bishop Bravard, the founder of the Cotentin Academic Society, left to the museum 2 paintings: *Le retour de pêche* by Joseph Vernet and *La mort de Polyxène* by Poussin, as well as a 17th century dresser.

he was refused because he was "only a supervisor and not a director" (as he put it).

On 23 May 1885, the committee decided to publish a catalogue (500 copies) to be sold for the benefit of the museum. It was written by Léon Quesnel.



Pages from the museum's first catalogue, 1886, Léon Quesnel.