



Remember our end-of-show party organized by Terry McBride at the Oak Bay Bowling Club in March? It's hard to believe that this area was once the site of the Willows Fairground / Exhibition Grounds, with the massive pavilion and racetrack now vanished without trace. Significantly, prior to the formation of our club in 1909, this annual fair, which endured from 1891 to 1941, offered an arts component providing the island's only facility for artists to display their wares.

According to the *Victoria Daily Colonist* of October 4, 1894, a 23-year old Emily Carr placed first in the Pen and Ink sketches category, and the following year she won first prize in Pencil Drawing, Pen and Ink sketches and Painting on China. Many years later, in 1926, Carr had her own show within the Willows Fair art exhibition, and the next year, the Island Arts and Craft Society as a group contributed 150 paintings, and thereafter assumed responsibility for these annual art shows, improving both their quality and scope.

The 1933 event, organized by IACS member Arthur Checkley, featured Carr and others of the "Modern" school, such as Max Maynard and Edythe Hembroff, and in 1934, Checkley bequeathed Carr a whole section to herself.

This proved to be her final exhibition at the Willows Fair, scene of her first public showings in the 1890s.

By this time, now in her 60s, her work had at last been accorded recognition on more than a regional scale, although the achievement was not reflected in her financial standing. Following a severe heart attack in 1937, her health and energy continued to deteriorate. By 1942, giving more time to writing, her painting activities had petered out. The road to Emily Carr's iconic status today was a long and hard one.

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