

WHAT'S INSIGHT

Summer 2020

IT TAKES A POD

Bringing the Orcas
Exhibition Together

A SACRED DANCE AND A SHARED SONG

A Celebration for a Restored
Kwakwaka'wakw Heraldic Pole

MURAL IN THE MAKING

Community Art,
Community Building



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The Royal BC Museum is located on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations). We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live and learn on this territory.

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Dear friends,

COVID-19 continues to impact our lives. We shut the museum doors in late March, and staff moved to working from home, using the opportunity to ramp up our online engagement. Meanwhile, our skeleton onsite team, including our conservators, have been carefully monitoring the health and the well-being of our collections, archives, natural history specimens and treasures to ensure their environment remains unimpacted. Their silent rounds are vast, spanning every area of the museum, from the herbarium to the departments of entomology, ornithology and herpetology through to the archives, and on to the art and social history collections. Kilometres of observations.

Some of our treasures are now harder to find. The woolly mammoth has always been very visible at the far end of the Ice Age corridor on the second floor, but he can now be seen online through the Learning Portal. It is with relief that we find our museum collections where we expect them to be, merely transposed to the digital world. My favourite Emily Carr painting, *Tanoa, Q.C.I.*, still rests in the Art Vault, but it is now totally accessible for viewing online. Even using a computer or mobile device, you can sense those balmy colours and the heady mist of Haida Gwaii.

Keeping safe at home provides an opportunity to acquire new skills and learn new things. The museum's Learning Portal offers a useful springboard in a variety of directions, helping us to understand the human and natural history of the province. And with travel restricted, there is an opportunity to venture out with our scientists on their field trips and experience collecting in remote areas as they guide us through the behaviour of nature.

We remain, of course, greatly concerned for all our community partners, visitors, volunteers, friends and academics.

Yours,

Professor Jack Lohman, CBE
Chief Executive Officer, Royal BC Museum

IT TAKES A POD

Bringing the Orcas Exhibition Together

EXHIBITION OPENS SUMMER 2021

VISIT RBCM.CA/ORCAS FOR MORE INFORMATION

KEEPING CURRENT

By Dr. Gavin Hanke
Curator of Vertebrate Zoology

When putting together an exhibition on orcas, the pace of scientific discovery is the greatest challenge. The flow of information is relentless. Given the time between exhibition development and opening day, there will be births, deaths and new discoveries. Parts of an exhibition can be rendered obsolete in an instant.

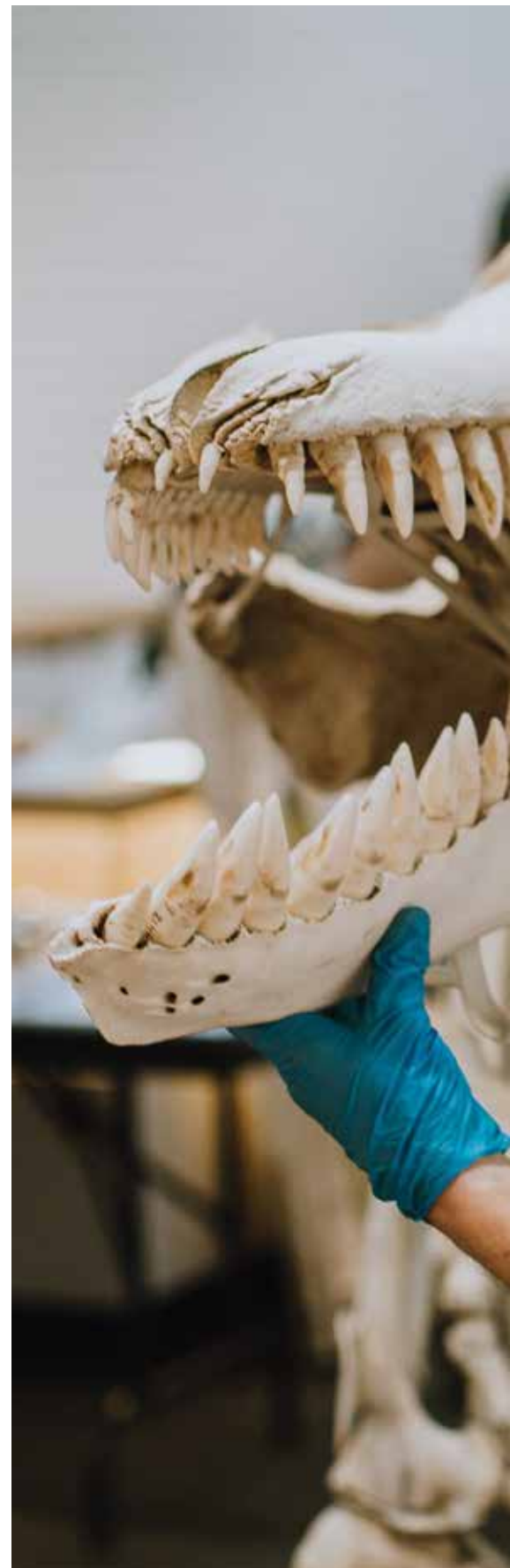
If we'd finished our exhibition before the 2016 discovery that Bigg's orcas commit infanticide, we'd still think orcas never kill other orcas. As far as we know it is rare, but oricide does happen—and we can only guess at motives. We're still speculating, too, on the diversity of prey species that are eaten globally by *Orcinus orca*. We say they eat 150 species, but it's likely far higher. New research is showing us subsurface behaviours, but an exhibition has an opening date and we can't wait for the results. We still have much to learn.

Tomorrow, a palaeontological team could unearth a fossil that might revolutionize ideas about when and where orcas evolved. But it takes years to prepare a fossil, interpret the bones and publish results. Sooner or later, in exhibit development, we draw the line in the sand and accept that new discoveries will not be captured.

An exhibition is more like a movie trailer than a feature film. We can't follow every twist and turn in the plot. And for animals as well-known as the Southern Residents, we certainly can't capture each character's individual story. Will Yoda (K36) survive this year? Who knows.

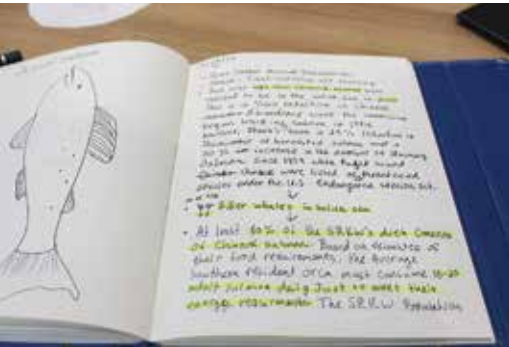
Fortunately for museum visitors, our deadlines aren't yours. You can keep going—see what surfaces this year, or 10 years from now. Follow the life of an individual whale, or population, or join larger initiatives to promote and protect marine diversity. Time and tide are on your side. Dive in.

Rhapsody's fully articulated skeleton arrives back at the Royal BC Museum for assembly by Dr. Gavin Hanke and team.





DEVELOPING EXPERIENCES



By Kim Gough
Learning Program Developer

The role of the Learning department in feature exhibition development is to cultivate programs and interactive experiences that allow visitors to understand, move through and engage with exhibition content in a new way. In 2018, I convened a sub-committee of colleagues from across the museum to start brainstorming possibilities for *Orcas*. No ideas were too big. Once we had a good list in place, it was time to gather feedback. In the past, we've had great success in co-developing interactives with the audiences they're aimed at, so we invited a group of home learners to help create the experiences.

We prototyped our favourite ideas and sat down with the home learners for their feedback. They tried things out, asked questions and made suggestions. Then it was their turn. After a crash course on orcas with our curator of vertebrates, Dr. Gavin Hanke, they worked on their own or in pairs to come up with gallery activities that they wanted to see. We took their ideas up to the gallery and got the feedback of visitors and other museum staff. The result was, to borrow their word, awesome. *Orcas* is full of new ideas and ways of approaching content, and we couldn't have done it without them.

WE ARE ALL CONNECTED



By Dr. India Young
Curator of Art and Images

In the upcoming *Orcas* exhibition, historical Indigenous belongings and contemporary artworks come together to show the longstanding relationships coastal Indigenous peoples share with their relations at sea. Two artworks, featured in the exhibition, by legendary Haida artist Bill Reid and risen star Michael Nicoll Yahgulanaas, illustrate how people and nature rely on each other, now and always. Reid's masterful carving (shown here) was originally commissioned for the museum's modern building in 1967. Working with Haida histories and iconographies he sculpted a new rendition of a dance screen. Major crest figures Killer Whale, Raven, Bear and Eagle share powers, knowledge and tricks as they move between lands, seas and skies. Each figure physically supports their neighbours' actions to tell the stories of Bear Mother, Wasco the Sea Wolf and the Big Fisherman. Yahgulanaas's watercolour illustrates and extends this same Haida worldview that we are all interconnected and depend upon each other. The figure in the centre rides into the Undersea World, just as Nanasimget rides Reid's whale. The blues of the sea and sky wrap a calligraphic contour around all beings, creating windows into relationships between humans and whales—and salmon and seabirds and ancestors and descendants. These artworks remind us that our non-human relations merit the same respect we give to each other. We are all connected.

POP CULTURE

(LEFT TOP) Home learner's notebooks.

(LEFT BOTTOM) Bill Reid cedar screen depicting Haida legends, 1967. RBCM 16639.

(BOTTOM 1) "Live and let live" is the message of the soundtrack for the 1965 film *Namu*. RBCM 2020.19.1.

(Bottom 2) EP record. Haida and jazz flautist Paul Horn recorded a duet at Sealand of the Pacific in Victoria in 1972. RBCM 2798.1.

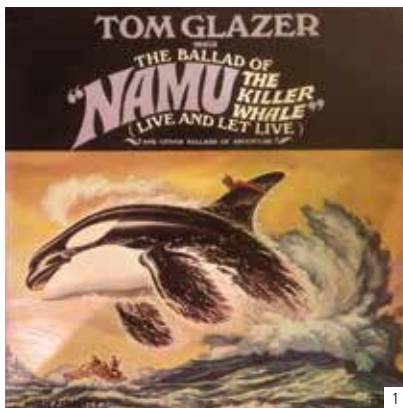
(Bottom 3) Sealand of the Pacific orca performance, Oak Bay Victoria, 1980s. RBCM 2020.61. Photograph courtesy of Jim Ryan.

By Dr. Lorne Hammond
Curator of History

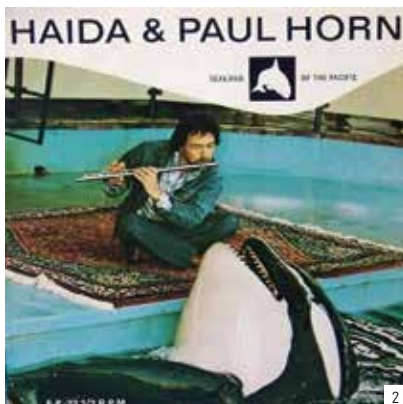
For many city dwellers, orcas swam into view when the wounded Moby Doll was towed to Vancouver in 1964. The next year, *Namu*, named for the BC town where he was trapped in fishing nets, became the first live-capture orca. *Namu* was sold and delivered to Ted Griffin's Tacoma aquarium, where a media frenzy, complete with souvenirs, saw thousands of families lining up to buy tickets. Orcas from the Salish Sea became the stars of the world's aquariums, and half of the 150 whales of J pod were captured and exported around the world. Many died. Even Hollywood began to tell us stories about orcas, some positive and some terrifying.

Orcas became symbols of our regional identity. We embraced their power and wild freedom. They influenced Greenpeace to launch its Save the Whales campaign. Our children saw them in aquariums, books and films. Those same children grew up to be their staunch defenders, strong voices in the campaign to "empty the tanks." Some activists have dedicated their lives to protecting them. We were all changed by orcas.

These are some of themes that we explore in *Orcas: Our Shared Future*. As a curator, I sought out engaging stories, lost images and unique objects that demonstrate the remarkable interaction between humans and the wild. See you there!



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3

A SACRED DANCE AND A SHARED SONG



A Celebration for a Restored Kwakwaka'wakw Heraldic Pole

By Lou-ann Neel
Repatriation Specialist

Between November 2019 and March 2020, the Kwakwaka'wakw Heraldic Pole at the Royal BC Museum underwent minor conservation and repair work, including repainting of the pole.

Chief David Knox, the great-grandson of Mungo Martin, and his cousin, Kwakiutl artist Mervyn Child, carried out the repair work, and then worked closely with the museum's conservation team to clean and prepare the pole for repainting.

A highlight of the project was the week of February 23–29, 2020, when the repainting process began. Chief Knox and Mervyn Child welcomed and invited many members of the museum's staff, museum volunteers and the general public to take part and experience what

(1) Kwakwaka'wakw ladies sharing a dance to celebrate this historic event.

(2) Prof. Jack Lohman and Chief Bill Cranmer provide a history on the relationship between the museum and the Knox/Martin and Hunt families.

(3) Chief Bill Cranmer shares a sacred song to bless the pole before it is moved.

(4) Lou-ann Neel and her mother, Lily Erford, brushing the pole with cedar boughs.

(5) The safety team ensures that the pole is properly positioned so it can be permanently secured.



it feels like to paint a totem pole. We estimate that nearly 500 people participated over the course of seven days.

On March 16, 2020, the pole was raised again in its original space at the entrance of Wawadit'la.

A special ceremony was held in Wawadit'la to celebrate three important points—first, to acknowledge, honour and thank volunteers and staff of the Facilities, Indigenous Collections, Conservation and Marketing

departments for their work in coordinating the project; second, to reaffirm the permissions provided by the Lekwungen people to Mungo Martin in raising the Heraldic Pole and Wawadit'la in their territories; and third, to reaffirm the relationship between the Knox/Martin family and the Royal BC Museum for the care of Wawadit'la and all the poles in Thunderbird Park.

Songs of celebration were shared, with everyone in attendance joining in on a fun dance, after which Chief

Bill Cranmer, Chief David Knox and Professor Jack Lohman shared final remarks, noting their appreciation for the strong, longstanding relationships between the museum and Indigenous communities across BC.



MURAL IN THE MAKING

Community Art, Community Building

By Chris O'Connor
Learning Program Developer

A few years ago, a storage space at the back of the museum was converted into the Learning Centre, a home for our Learning programs. When we took over, it was stripped down to bare concrete: big, rough and echoing, but filled with light and potential. Month by month we added new flooring, furniture and paint to make it cozy. But there was still a big ugly wall in the middle of the space, and it bugged me. It was calling for something.

Enter Kay Gallivan. Kay is a remarkable artist, which is part of the reason I asked her to lead a mural project, but she is also skilled at working with communities. I wanted the process of *making* to have importance. Kay invited a team of diverse artists to join, and I invited youth from Foundry Victoria (a centre of integrated health and social service support for young people), as well as Songhees Elder Joan Morris. This created a dynamic team of creative thinkers and perspectives. Our guiding question was “What do we want museums to be?” Through multiple brainstorming workshops, four themes emerged:

- Museums should represent us (all of us).
- Museums should be an active place for creation.
- Museums should be a place to connect multiple histories.
- Museums should be a place of belonging.

When the Royal BC Museum is open again, we’ll have a big party to reveal the entire mural (and it’s a big one). But in the meantime, here are two small sneak peeks.



(LEFT) This alien was incorporated into the mural, telling its story on the walls of the museum.

(ABOVE) Foxes using a pot that looks a little like a fox. The object is intricately connected with the figures using it.

FALL INSTITUTE

Highlights From This Year's Research

By Leah Best
Head of Knowledge

In this issue of *What's inSight*, the research team serves up a tasty reminder of the ongoing scientific and humanities work that shapes the research program at the Royal BC Museum. This small sampling of diverse projects testifies to the breadth of the collections and to the expertise of staff, research associates, partners and like-minded communities and collaborators.

The museum is guided in its research efforts by the current five-year Research Strategy (2016–2021). This spring, the museum started the planning process for developing a new research strategy that will foreground our efforts to be a more inclusive and equitable organization—one that acknowledges multiple knowledge systems, including Indigenous knowledge, and works even more collaboratively with engaged communities to create and share new learning.

BUSTER THE DINOSAUR GETS A NEW NAME

By Dr. Victoria Arbour
Curator of Palaeontology

BC has a brand new dinosaur—*Ferrisaurus sustutensis*, the iron lizard from the Sustut River. This small cousin of *Triceratops* was published as a new species in November 2019 in the open-access scientific journal *PeerJ* by me and my colleague David Evans at the Royal Ontario Museum. *Ferrisaurus* lived about 68 million years ago in what is now northern BC, and is known from a partial skeleton including bones from the shoulders, arm, leg and foot. The discovery of this little dinosaur and its identification as a unique species points to the potential for future dinosaur finds if we keep looking!



(LEFT) Students from across North America were able to meet Buster the *Ferrisaurus* “in the flesh” (or at least in the bones!) through the museum’s Digital Fieldtrips program.

(TOP) Dr. Joel Gibson (right) and Dr. Henry Choong (left) in the field. Photograph courtesy of Scott Gilmore.

(RIGHT) Botanist Heidi Guest pressing plant specimens during an alpine expedition.



INTERTIDAL FLIES

By Dr. Henry H.C. Choong
Curator of Invertebrates

By Dr. Joel G. Gibson
Curator of Entomology

The larvae of *Oedoparena* (Diptera: Dryomyzidae) may be the main cause of barnacle mortality in the high intertidal zone. However, data on distribution of adult *Oedoparena* and ecological interactions of *Oedoparena* larvae with barnacles in the intertidal zone on the west coast of North America remain limited. Furthermore, microhabitat information is important as global warming could have differential effects on the survivability of *Oedoparena* larvae and their barnacle prey. In this study, we provide new data and insights into the occurrence of *Oedoparena* and other insects on Vancouver Island as it relates to barnacles and shoreline types.

ALPINE EXPLORATIONS

By Claudia Copley
Entomology Collection Manager
and Researcher

For several years, Royal BC Museum collecting efforts have focused on alpine areas as we try to fill the gaps in our collection. Last year's fieldwork, supported by staff and funding from BC Parks, saw us in the Chilcotin Plateau area, where we spent three days collecting on each of four mountains. The alpine team varies depending on who is available to join us, but it typically consists of several scientists from the museum and colleagues external to the institution. Last year the expedition included me, vertebrate collection manager Darren Copley, curator of botany Ken Marr, botany collection manager Heidi Guest and research associate Robb Bennett from the museum, as well as two Ministry

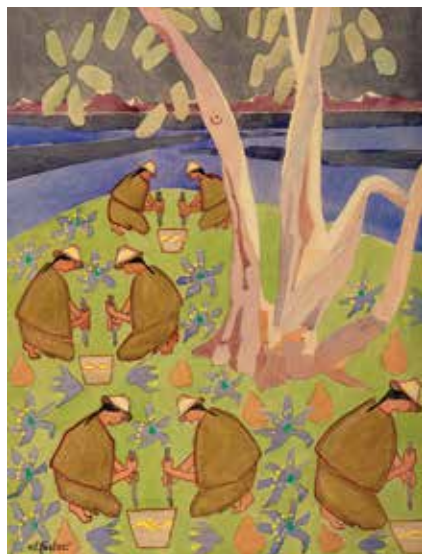


of Forest, Lands and Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development staff: entomologist Ken White and bryologist Michael Ryan. This provided us with an ideal mix of plant and animal expertise in order to effectively sample the sites. Stay tuned through various museum channels to hear more about the highlight discoveries of these explorations.



(ABOVE) Lucy Bell contemplates the care of objects at the museum.

(BOTTOM) Hilda Vincent Foster, *Camosun: The Gathering of Camas Was a Ceremony*, ND. Watercolour on paper. BCA PDP01738.



TO STAND UPRIGHT INDIGENIZING COLLECTIONS CARE

By Lucy Bell
Head of Indigenous
Collections and Repatriation

To modernize the Royal BC Museum's Indigenous collection, we must first look back. We must look back to the ways these belongings were once shown, shared, talked about and cared for. As a Haida, I can apply my traditional teachings to modernizing museum practice. I believe it is important to keep a Waahlaal gudaang, a potlatch mindset, when interacting with the coastal belongings. We need to consider how the masks, coppers, button blankets and headdresses were a part of the potlatch, the highest ceremony on the coast, and hold them in the same high regard in museum exhibits, storage and our database. We can also modernize our practice by considering the traditional languages

that once surrounded the belongings. When I look at the Haida poles in the museum, I think of their Haida name, *gyaa.aang*, "to stand." This word tells us that a pole is meant to stand, and that if we are to care for poles, we need to display and store them with respect by standing them upright. With a desire to do the right thing and by listening and learning from and with Indigenous people and the lessons from our *kuniisii*, our ancestors, we can show *yahgudang*, great respect, to the Indigenous collections and the communities they originated from.

ARTISTS WHO HAPPENED TO BE WOMEN AT THE BC ARCHIVES

By Dr. India Young
Curator, Art and Images

I joined the Royal BC Museum fairly recently, in October 2019, as the curator of art and images. Upon my arrival I made a surprising and significant discovery. The BC Archives holds a distinctly inclusive collection of women artists, with 36 percent of its artworks created by women. While that number isn't nearly half, it is a very high percentage for historical collections. The acquisition records for many of these artworks paint incomplete pictures. In the first major research I undertake at the museum, I hope to fill in many gaps by writing artist biographies and artwork histories. I am beginning with an artist whose works immediately caught my eye: Hilda Vincent Foster. Her acquisition record consisted of an undated, hand-written biography signed "W. W." We know she lived in Cobble Hill for many years and painted with the Victoria Sketch Club. At the Fall Institute I will share what I have learned about Foster and about how the archive's collection became so unique.



YOU'RE GONNA NEED A BIGGER BOOKSHELF

Review of *Sharks, Skates, Rays and
Chimeras of British Columbia*

By Dr. Gavin Hanke
Curator of Vertebrate Zoology

Shark: the word that sends shivers of fear through those who remember John Williams's iconic score—you know that opening theme. But there's more to sharks than Peter Benchley led us to believe. His story did sharks an injustice. In the years that followed the release of *Jaws*, sharks were targeted as a menace. Thousands were slaughtered. Their relatives, the skates, stingrays and ratfishes, were ignored or forgotten.

Fast forward 45 years, and science and curiosity—plus a wave of people concerned with ocean health—have turned the tide on the hatred of sharks and their relatives. One massive great white shark even has a name, Deep Blue, and people swim with her in the open ocean. Such a thing would have been unthinkable in the years after Chrissie Watkins vanished in the opening scenes of *Jaws*.

In June, look for a new book by Gordon McFarlane and Dr. Jackie King detailing the diversity of cartilaginous fishes—sharks, skates, rays and chimeras—known to exist in BC waters. Chew on the history of our shark fisheries and the misguided slaughter of basking sharks along our coast. Sink your teeth into species accounts. Digest the latest on conservation efforts and today's threats to cartilaginous fishes. This new 232-page book is required reading for any aficionados of Canada's coastal chondrichthyans.

Find it at rbcm.ca/books or at your favourite bookstore.

(LEFT) Authors Gordon McFarlane and Jackie King sampling a bluntnose sixgill shark on the shore of the Strait of Georgia near Comox, BC. Photograph courtesy of G. McFarlane/B. Andrews.

(RIGHT) A basking shark caught by fishers off central BC in July 1901. BCA D-02035.



(ABOVE) Beacon Hill Park, March 23, 2020. Photograph courtesy of Andrew Plank.

COLLECTING FOR OUR TIME

The Royal BC Museum COVID-19 Initiative

By Erika Stenson
Head of Marketing, Communications and
Business Development

I recently read an interesting article about being prepared for the unexpected. The author noted that there is a French word, *prevoyant*, that has no English equivalent. It is “the power of a prepared mind to act upon chance events in a world of deep uncertainty.” Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Hackett Fischer wrote that *prevoyant* is also “taking a broad view in projects of large purpose; and thinking for the long run.”

We are living in an unprecedented moment of disruption in history. The Royal BC Museum is thinking for the long run. In April, the museum and archives launched a public engagement initiative to gather BC’s pandemic stories in real time and build a longer-term repository project to capture its legacy.

The Royal BC Museum embodies the understanding that museums are evolving into spaces for reflection on relevant social and environmental changes. The Collecting for Our Time project guides how museum staff work with our communities during this unprecedented chapter in BC’s history. The project creates new understandings of the collecting nature of museums and archives in general while also generating interest in how the Royal BC Museum collects and what BC communities will want to remember. The project outlines a framework for accepting donations of tangible and intangible heritage created by our communities and establishes a repository of the material for the future.

Staff at the museum know and feel how sensitive this project is. This is an emotional time for everyone. Our teams carry the same worries and fears as the people in the communities we serve, so this project includes time for reflection and self-care. The museum endeavours to do nothing that will exacerbate the crisis or detract from the important work of essential service providers. We are looking to the future, and when it is appropriate, museum staff will provide active support to those from whom we seek to collect.

The Learning team is developing online programs to support people in capturing their personal experiences,

including by providing advice and examples of at-home collecting and recording projects.

The Collecting for Our Time project has a larger purpose. It will be a legacy for future generations to help them understand more than the historical details. We’ll leave behind the stories of the people and how BC came together as a community to meet a changed world.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DEPUTY CEO JOANNE ORR

The Royal BC Museum has a duty to serve the people of BC. As I write this, in the midst of the COVID-19 lockdown, we are working on what that duty looks like in these unprecedented times. We have moved as much of our service as we can online, finding creative ways to provide access and learning opportunities. Our 3D printer is no longer creating replica orca skulls for our upcoming exhibition—it has been repurposed as part of a collective effort to produce masks for first responders.

The museum is a collecting organization: that is what museums and archives do. We see it as our duty to create a legacy collection of this historic time in BC. We have initiated a project to respond rapidly to the situation and to “collect the now,” using the approach of Rapid Response Collecting. We want to do this as part of the community and to be guided by the community’s thoughts on what is important to collect. Our aim is to invite the people of BC to co-create a future COVID-19 collection that captures how we want to remember this time.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

April 1, 2019–March 31, 2020

Thank you. We are grateful to the following donors, organizations and foundations that have contributed to the Royal BC Museum and the Royal BC Museum Foundation in the past year. With their support, our staff were able to develop exciting outreach programs, make new research discoveries and build stronger connections with people across British Columbia through field work, talks and community consultations.

The Royal BC Museum also greatly appreciates the ongoing support of the Province of British Columbia, through the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, and the Royal BC Museum Foundation. Their core support makes our work possible.

Please join us in thanking these generous funders for their invaluable contributions to our work and to developing the Royal BC Museum as a world-class centre for history, culture, research and learning.

We have made every effort to include the names of all donors who made a gift from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020. If your name was inadvertently missed or if you have any questions, please email Mischelle vanThiel at mischelle.vanthiel@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca. Thank you for your generosity.

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THANK YOU GIFTS TO THE COLLECTION

April 1, 2019–March 31, 2020

Thank you to all donors who have contributed to the collections of the Royal BC Museum during this fiscal year. Over the course of the year, many objects, specimens and documentary records have entered the provincial collection at the Royal BC Museum. These donations come from generous individuals and organizations who aim to help us fulfil our provincial mandate to advance new knowledge and understanding of BC's cultural and natural history. With these donations, our institution is able to preserve, research and exhibit the incredible diversity of our province and to create public programs that explore it.

If you would like to know more about donating to the provincial collection at the Royal BC Museum, please contact Caroline Davies, senior registrar, at 250-893-4101 or cdavies@royalbcmuseum.bc.ca.



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PAPER TRAIL

Glen Kelly Marks
30 Years at the Museum



By Jon Roodbol
Facilities Supervisor

For staff at the Royal BC Museum, morning rituals run the gamut from reviewing the day's meetings in your calendar to buying an Americano or catching up with colleagues in the hall.

One early-morning constant in all of our lives is the cheery arrival of Glen Kelly, who travels from office to office throughout the museum and archives, picking up paper from blue boxes, hauling away the assorted paper waste and tipping it into a basement bin for recycling.

Remarkably, Glen has been working with us for 30 years.

Glen belongs to the Royal BC Museum community, a direct result of his involvement in another important group: Community Living Victoria, which provides services and support to people with intellectual disabilities and their families.

After 30 years, Glen has developed varied and nuanced relationships with staff members along his route. He takes a deal of pleasure in teasing some people or shooting paper hoops with others. He confides with others, carefully selecting a movie for the upcoming weekend.

At the same time, he is a professional, conscientious and courteous presence. Often he'll tap his wrist in inquiry as he pops his head into an office, aware that a recurring meeting is about to start, checking that there's still time for him to make his rounds among the blue boxes.

One recent and terrifically gratifying result from our long-term relationship with Glen is that Community Living Victoria has designated the Royal BC Museum its Employer of the Year for 2020.

We're grateful that Glen is part of our community and proud to accept this honour.

Glen during a trip to Kamloops for a bowling tournament, 2017. Photograph courtesy of Special Olympics BC.

WHERE THE LAND MEETS THE SEA

Insects and Other Invertebrates of the Shores

By Dr. Joel Gibson
Curator of Entomology

By Dr. Henry Choong
Curator of Invertebrates

The intersection of the land and the sea is a special and often mysterious place. Those of us who are fortunate enough to live on Vancouver Island or the Gulf Islands know that although the shoreline is all around us, we still have so much more to learn about it.

Beaches, coves, inlets, estuaries, lagoons and islets are found all along our province's 25,000 kilometres of coastline. However, shoreline habitats are not homogeneous. They encompass a continuum of dynamic microsystems that are neither fully terrestrial nor fully marine. Rocks, sand, driftwood, kelp wrack and human-built structures

or debris can all be present or absent on any given stretch of BC's shoreline. The defining line between salt water and dry land changes constantly as the tides go in and out. And in each little portion of each stretch of coastline, both above and below that sea-level line, animals and plants have found a way to live.

Previously, most biodiversity research has focused on either marine or terrestrial organisms. As a result, shoreline animals, both above and below the surface of the sea, have rarely been the focus of concerted efforts. Insects and other invertebrates that live on the shoreline are unique fauna to consider. They are not insects of the meadows and forests. They are not marine invertebrates of the open water and ocean depths. Many species have become specialized to live only on shorelines, and can be found nowhere else in the province. If we are to





(LEFT) Dr. Henry Choong and Ayla Barton collect marine invertebrates from the shoreline of French Beach Provincial Park.

(CENTRE) Plants, driftwood and freshwater streams are all components of the shoreline ecosystem.

(TOP) Dr. Joel Gibson uses a sweep net to collect flies.

(RIGHT) Dr. Joel Gibson has to use his aspirator (or "pooter") to suck small specimens right off of the driftwood.



understand the biodiversity of British Columbia, and understand what impact human industry is having on that biodiversity, we must learn more about shoreline invertebrates.

The United Nations has proclaimed 2021 to 2030 a Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. The aim is to support efforts to reverse the cycle of decline in ocean health and to unite stakeholders worldwide within a common framework so that we can work towards improving conditions in our marine and coastal environments. Biodiversity is a significant component of healthy ocean ecosystems. Protecting biodiversity is crucial to maintaining ocean health. Shorelines and intertidal zones are particularly sensitive areas, so biodiversity loss here would likely result in corresponding decline in ecosystem health.

FIELD RESEARCH 2019

Dr. Joel Gibson, curator of entomology, and Dr. Henry Choong, curator of invertebrate zoology, spent the summer of 2019 conducting field research on the shorelines of Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. From Port Renfrew through Sooke and Victoria and up to Nanaimo and Courtenay, a large number of diverse shoreline habitats exist within a relatively small and easily accessible area. This research included a project developed in partnership between BC Parks and the Royal BC Museum. As a result, 22 BC Parks were visited and surveyed for shoreline insects and other invertebrates. Drs. Gibson and Choong surveyed invertebrates by hand collecting, sweep netting, Malaise trapping, pitfall trapping,



French Beach Provincial Park features a wide, pebbly beach and plenty of diverse microhabitats.

observation and photography. Great care was taken to ensure zero permanent impact on the environments studied. In total, over 2,200 specimens were photographed or collected and deposited at the Royal BC Museum. These specimens will be identified and used to generate species lists for all of the parks visited. In most cases, these will be the first such species lists ever generated for these locations.

SPECIAL CREATURES, SPECIAL PLACES

Jáji7em and Kw'ulh Marine Park (Sandy Island Marine Park) is located off the northern tip of Denman Island. This park is accessible by foot from Denman Island only at low tide.

At only 30 hectares in size, the park is a little sand spit with a clump of trees and seal-covered rocks. However, a first look at the island reveals a multitude of beautiful shoreline inhabitants. The wide, sandy beach of the park is home to a dense stand of eelgrass. A wide range of marine invertebrates rely on intact eelgrass meadows as their habitat. The sand dunes that make up the bulk of the park's area are home to a number of unique insects. Miniature bee flies, wasps and surf flies have been identified from these dunes. Some of these species may have never been found anywhere else in the province.

On the opposite side of Vancouver Island sits French Beach Provincial Park. This park features a wide, pebbly beach, exposed to open ocean and

storms. A large amount of kelp wrack also washes up on the shore here. As it dries and decays in the sun, this kelp wrack is home to many fly species. These species can be collected nowhere else except balls of kelp, but can form huge swarms when the conditions are right. Also found on the kelp are hydroids. These tiny marine animals, which are related to jellyfish, live on the surface of kelp but are much more easily collected once the kelp has been deposited on the beach.

THE WORK CONTINUES

More shorelines await visits from Drs. Gibson and Choong. In future field seasons, the pair will be working in Haida Gwaii and Cape Scott Provincial



A FOND FAIRWELL

We Say Goodbye to a Former Board Member

Park. Both locations feature extensive shorelines and diverse microhabitats. The more exposed, windswept locales could turn out to be biologically quite different from the gentle beaches of the Gulf Islands. In addition to continuing collaboration with BC Parks, future field work will also be conducted with researchers from the Council of the Haida Nation, the Haida Heritage Centre and Haida Gwaii Museum.

More than a trip to the beach, the research of Drs. Gibson and Choong has allowed the Royal BC Museum to contribute to our shared knowledge of the biodiversity of British Columbia. The specimens gathered during this fieldwork are available for all future questions about the things that make their homes where the land meets the sea.

The Royal BC Museum was saddened to hear of the passing of former board member Neil Sterritt on April 9. Mr. Sterritt was Gitksan, a member of the Fireweed clan of Kispiox, BC. He was president of Sterritt Consulting, a company specializing in Indigenous issues. He was a key strategist and spokesperson on constitutional issues for the Assembly of First Nations and was appointed co-chair of the Aboriginal Table by the four national Indigenous organizations of Canada: the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (then the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada), the Métis National Council and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (then the Native Council of Canada). He was also a fellow and a past governor of the Royal Canadian Geographic Society. Mr. Sterritt dedicated himself to building an understanding and expression of Indigenous citizenship in Canada. The museum board, executive and staff express their condolences to Mr. Sterritt's family and friends. His was a voice that will be missed.



(ABOVE) Close up of the chewing surface of a mammoth molar. Strong enamel ridges helped these megaherbivores to break down and chew tough stems and grasses. RBCM.EH2006.012.0009.

(RIGHT) Cara demineralizing mammoth bone, step one of the collagen extraction process, at the SFU Archaeology Isotope Lab.



BUILDING A PUZZLE

Piecing Together BC Ice Age Megafauna

By Laura Termes, PhD student,
Simon Fraser University

By Cara Kubiak, PhD student,
Simon Fraser University

Stored away in the mammalogy and palaeontology collections at the Royal BC Museum are the remnants of an ancient, diverse Vancouver Island landscape. Among them is a mammoth tooth found in the 1890s, hardened with a chocolate-brown sheen from tumbling in an island stream. An ash-coloured tusk pulled from a Victoria gravel pit in 1965 rests in Ethafoam, and an algae-stained muskox skull fragment, found last year on a nearby beach, gleams with a conservation treatment.

These are just a few of the animal teeth, tusks and bones that hold clues to the mammalian landscape of the most recent Ice Age in BC. PhD students from the Simon Fraser University archaeology department are unlocking this relatively recent past by analyzing the bones and teeth of extinct animals to better understand the ecology, distribution and age of Ice Age megafauna in BC.

Throughout the lifetime of an animal, biochemical signatures of the animal's diet and the environment in which it lived are incorporated into the tissues it builds. Analysis of these tissues, such as the preserved collagen extracted from bones, can provide direct evidence of what kind of foods the animals were eating, what geographical areas those foods came from and under what climatic conditions those foods existed.

Cara Kubiak is using new methods for compound specific isotope analysis for a higher-resolution look into animal diet and, and by extension, the

Late Pleistocene palaeoecosystem. Radiocarbon dating specimens of the grizzly bear and the extinct short-faced bear housed at the Royal BC Museum demonstrated that these species were alive at the same time on Vancouver Island. Cara will explore the ecological implications of this overlap with compound specific isotope analysis to allow for a more detailed comparison of where these animals were in the food web and the resource specializations between the species.

Laura Termes is eagerly awaiting radiocarbon dates of some 25 specimens sampled at the museum. For this batch, the focus was on mammoths, as their tremendous food and water requirements provide a gauge for British Columbia's Ice Age ecosystem productivity. Laura hopes to engage with the ongoing discussion on Vancouver Island glacial refugia, explore how Royal BC Museum megafauna dates relate to others in the province and western North America, and dispel notions of a barren Ice Age landscape.

The BC Megafauna Project is sampling collections across the province, with each sample helping to piece together the province's Ice Age megafauna puzzle. The project has a few more places to visit and is always on the lookout for more samples. For more information and updates, visit sfu.ca/megafauna.html.

Cara and Laura would like to express their thanks to curators Grant Keddie and Dr. Victoria Arbour, who have welcomed the research and shared their collection knowledge. The Royal BC Museum graciously granted access to over 50 specimens, making this collection unrivalled in the province in terms of the quantity and variety of extinct and extant animals.

INDIGENOUS CONSULTATION AT THE BC ARCHIVES

The Records of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate



By Genevieve Weber
Archivist

In 2019, the BC Archives acquired the records of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate in BC, often referred to as the Oblates or OMI for short. The Oblates are an international Catholic order of priests that first arrived in British Columbia from the Oregon Territory in the mid-1800s. To fulfil their mission of evangelizing the poor, the order established both “white” and “Indian” missions around the province. Often the priests and lay brothers, as a result of the remote nature of the communities in which they served, became de facto social workers, medical personnel and liaisons to the Indian Agents. A key aspect to their missionary work was the administration of 10 Residential Schools throughout the province.

The acquisition is substantial in size and comprises records in many

formats: textual, graphic, cartographic and audiovisual. The collection encompasses a significant body of evidence relating to the colonial history of the province. Religious groups such as this one play a role in many aspects of society, and these records—committee files, sound recordings, photographs, mission correspondence and more—illustrate that.

My job as processing archivist is to preserve and make accessible the records. This involves a number of responsibilities: researching the records to determine the core functions (the roles and responsibilities) of their creators; determining the original order of the records and arranging them to reflect the way in which they were created, used and stored; describing the records in order to provide context and help researchers understand them; re-housing the records for preservation and labelling all new



(LEFT) Kamloops Residential School. B-05572.

(CENTRE 1–2) Photographs from a scrapbook made by members of the Kamloops Residential School dance group. Photos show the school pool and chapel.

(RIGHT) Bradley Alexander of the Ktunaxa Nation reviewing records and identifying OMI photographs from St. Eugene's Residential School, Cranbrook.



envelopes, folders and boxes; online cataloguing; privacy reviews; and many other tasks.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Final Report's Calls to Action demand that archives be transparent about records relating to Residential Schools. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous people calls on governments to recognize Indigenous Peoples' right to "free, prior and informed consent" regarding the use of land, resources and traditional knowledge connected to them. Although not the only focus of the collection, the Indigenous communities that the Oblates lived and worked with are an important subject of the records. In order to meet our obligations to the Indigenous communities we serve, consultation has been integral to our work. Where archivists once might have reached out to communities only after their records were processed, in this case, we have decided a proactive approach is required. We are already working with communities connected to the records as we process, listening to their needs, concerns and questions.

Recognizing that students attending the schools came from all over the province (and beyond), we started by reaching out to people in the communities where the schools were located, speaking with community archivists, traditional knowledge

specialists, school survivors and their families, and community leaders and representatives. Some groups, like the Ktunaxa Nation Traditional Knowledge and Language department staff, have come to Victoria to review the records at the archives and discuss priorities for them (for example, which records from St. Eugene Residential School in Cranbrook should be digitized for priority access by their community); other groups, such as the Kamloops Indian Band, invited me to come to their community to discuss issues like privacy and access restrictions. For that visit, we met in the former Kamloops Residential School, an experience that was deeply moving.

Outcomes of this consultation process will be many: descriptions of the records will be more complete and meaningful for former students and their families accessing them; people and places in photographs will be identified; awareness of the records before they become publicly accessible will, we hope, result in less pain for the people who are the subjects of the records; cultural restrictions and privacy concerns will be identified; and the communities' priorities for the records will be heard and met. Another benefit, of course, is the wonderful friendships and professional relationships we are building in the process.



DATA IS BORING ...OR SO YOU THOUGHT

By Dave Stewart
Digital Manager

“Collections data” is just another way of saying “the stories we tell about a thing.” The Royal BC Museum is in a much better position to tell great stories about our artifacts and specimens now that we’ve finished a multi-year project to consolidate our collections data. The impact will be felt by historical researchers and scientists for generations to come. It’s an impressive feat, but it’s one that could go largely unnoticed because, well, data is boring. There, I said it.

I said it, but I don’t believe it. I just said what you might be thinking.

When I explain my IT job to people, eyes glaze over. As soon as I mention the word database, I lose my audience. People check their watches. What if I told you the story of the evolution of our museum data is, in fact, wildly compelling? The tale spans 150 years and involves devastating fires at the BC Legislature, the timely invention of typewriters, and attempts to track climate change, and it ends with artificial intelligence taking over the world.

Now you’re perking up. Here’s the story in brief.

The museum opens in 1886 in the so-called Birdcages, the old wooden buildings that once housed BC’s Legislative Assembly. It opens with 200 natural history specimens. The data for those specimens is handwritten in cursive script and captured in bound ledgers.

Jump ahead to March 27, 1957. The last Birdcage building burns down. The fire begins shortly after midnight in the roof, and the flames rise to such a height that hundreds of local residents gather to see firemen fight the blaze well into the night. Full disclosure...the collection had been moved to a new location years before. Nothing was lost. I’ve added unnecessary drama here, but I did it for a good reason. I want to plant an image in your mind. Imagine you work for the museum in 1957 and our collection is still in the Birdcages. You see the fire, and you have a split-second decision to make. Do you grab the ledger, or as many specimens as you can carry? Hold on to that thought.

Allow me to skip ahead through about 60 years of typewriters, index cards, paper forms and an ever-increasing amount of data. Finally, as of January 2020, our collection treasures—all seven million of them—are digitally catalogued in one system!

But the most exciting part of this story is what comes next: how we share the data.



We share our natural history data with biodiversity databases like Canadensys (canadensys.com) and the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (gbif.org). Flora and fauna travel where they will. They don't exactly check in with customs before they cross international borders. Luckily, climate-change scientists can now track our native species all over the world.

In the realm of human history, our data work is vitally important to Indigenous repatriation efforts. In some cases we don't just share our data—we give it back to

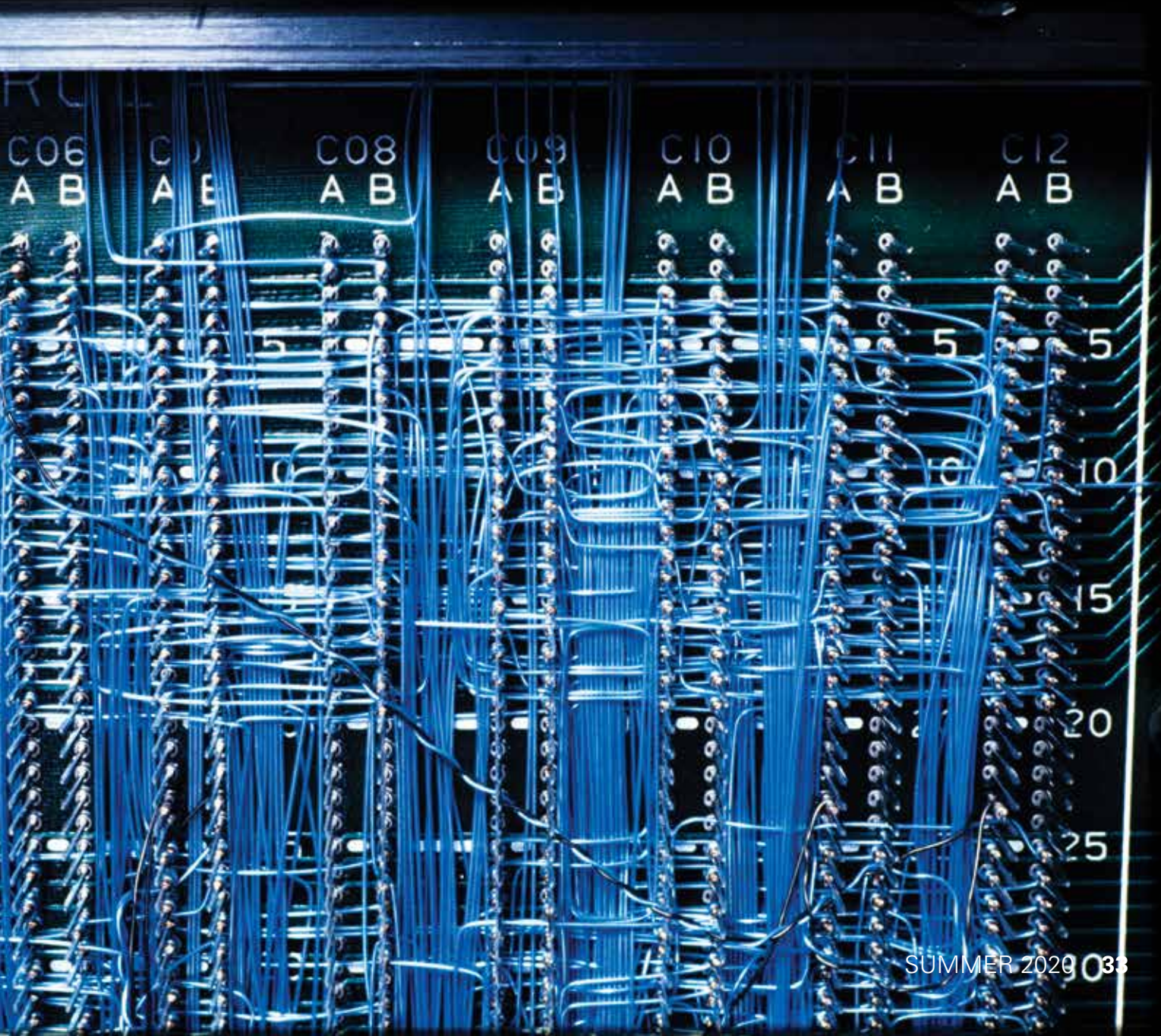
communities, along with their artworks and belongings.

In the near future, we'll begin a new era of sharing our data with artificial intelligence for the sake of advanced research. If, like me, you believe that machines are on the verge of developing consciousness, let's hope our new binary friends gain an immediate appreciation of our rich cultural heritage. Fingers crossed.

So there you go: data isn't boring after all. I hope you have a new understanding of the precarious history of our data and its value. Sometimes I worry about

how to protect our physical collections and our data against the threat of natural disasters like earthquakes, tsunamis and fires. If disaster strikes while I'm in the museum and I can only take a few collection items with me, or the hard drive with all our collections data, I bet you know which one I'd choose.

One of the early computers in BC. Digital collections data will soon be analyzed by artificial intelligence for advanced research. BC Archives i-19601.





CULINARY AT ITS FINEST

Royal BC Museum New Catering Options

If you live in Victoria, BC, you know we are fortunate to be dining on some of the best food BC has to offer. Fresh, organic farm-to-table is what we do best, and we are pleased to bring some of Victoria's finest catering partners to our venue rental program. In September we expanded our offerings to three preferred partners that specialize in everything from corporate lunches to exquisite banquet dinners, all presented against the unique and stunning background of the museum galleries. We are proud to be working with the very talented Toque Catering, Truffles Catering and Island Culinary Service for all of your event needs.

Toque Catering specializes in events large and small, from galas and fundraisers to gourmet boxed lunches. Chef Nicholas Waters

ensures each menu is perfectly tailored to accommodate each event's unique style and culinary needs. All menus are seasonally inspired, delicious and beautifully presented.

Truffles Catering offers dedicated service, locally driven and distinctive cuisine for events of all sizes.

Executive Chef JP Green creates menus with a focus on high-quality ingredients, sustainable food practices and working closely with local farmers.

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The Learning Portal is a dynamic and intuitive online resource designed to engage learners through spectacular audio and video content, fascinating images and compelling articles. Follow your curiosity at rbc.ca/learning

RESEARCH PORTAL

Research is key to our mission at the Royal BC Museum. We produce original research grounded in our extensive collection of more than 7,000,000 specimens, artifacts and cultural objects. The online Research Portal showcases featured articles, publications and projects by museum staff. Explore rbc.ca/research-portal

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