

LOOKING BACK at Roundup

Lisa Codd

This is the first time I have been asked to write a “history” of something I was actually a part of. Okay, I can admit it feels a little weird...

Museums Roundup (also simply called *Roundup*) was founded in 1961, not long after the formation of the BC Museums Association in 1957.

When *Museums Roundup* was first published in 1961, the BC Museums Association was only in its fourth year and was run by volunteers. Most of the content consisted of the proceedings of the 1960 BCMA conference. By the time the second issue was released, content included updates from several museums, and professional advice.

In January 1970 the journal received a new look with a cover design featuring a Thunderbird illustrated by Tlingit/Kwakwaka'wakw artist Tony Hunt. Bob Broadland took over the job of editor, asserting in his editorial that “museums need to be about ideas, not just stuff.”

Another redesign in 1982 resulted in a simplified cover design and a glossy interior that improved the quality of printed images and photographs featured in the journal.

In the fall 1984 issue, *Museums Roundup* became more of a newsletter than a journal, and was redesigned to be less expensive to print. The 8 to 10 page publication was issued monthly, full of letters, photos of BCMA functions, and news of goings-on around the province. *Who's News* premiered in the fall 1984 issue.

Another redesign happened in 1992. *Museums Roundup* was published six times per year, and included both longer academic articles and shorter news items and updates. In 1999 the journal returned to a quarterly publication schedule, with another redesign in 2000 when four issues were published featuring guest editors.

Roundup has undergone many changes since 1961, including its transformation to an electronic publication during my tenure.



Re-design and re-deployment of *Roundup* as an electronic publication was taken on by my consulting firm, Shared Solutions, in 2009. In partnership with graphic designer Nelz Agustin, I took on the task of rethinking the publication to meet the needs of BC's museum community in 2009, which was a challenging time for the association. Funding to the BCMA was reduced and a generational shift was taking place among professionals, creating the need for more communication between colleagues.

Below: Detail of *Museums Roundup* cover featuring illustration by Tony Hunt.



We felt there was a more vital need than ever for *Roundup* to serve as a place for conversation, connection, and reflection. However, we also recognized the list-serv and other forms of electronic communication were taking over some of *Roundup*'s previous functions as a publisher of current news relevant to BC Museum professionals.

Our approach was shaped by our belief that the people who belong to BC's community of museum professionals are the voice, audience, and subject of *Roundup*. We wanted to present the BCMA as a community of colleagues and a collection of voices. We wanted to include voices from small places and big places,

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from new colleagues and experienced ones, and from both paid staff and volunteers. We wanted to encourage content from all corners of the province. And we hoped that some of the stories we collected would be weird. And, thankfully, some of them were.

My favorite feature we introduced was "Lunch with Owl" which was loosely inspired by "Lunch with Jan Wong", where journalist Jan Wong took high profile politicians to lunch and then interrogated them, publishing the results in the *Globe & Mail*. Lunch with Owl was a bit friendlier. Owl was actually me (sorry, spoiler alert) and there were no actual lunches. I interviewed high profile members of our community over the phone. During the interview, we would come up with 5 or 6 questions for "owl" to ask. The questions were then emailed to the interviewee, who had a few days to consider them and respond via email.

The January 1962 issue was comprised of articles reprinted from other museum publications, including an article on "Showmanship" that, among other things, argued for the value of women volunteers. The article explained: "Women, with their freshness, vigour and dedication when helping a worthy cause should be an integral part of every museum. Why not some special museum tours, taking exhibits to the shut-ins in hospitals and old people's homes, etc., arranging for an imaginative program for school children and so forth?"



Above: The first issue of *Museums Roundup* was published in January 1961.



Right: Lunch with Rick Goodacre, from the Winter 2012 issue.

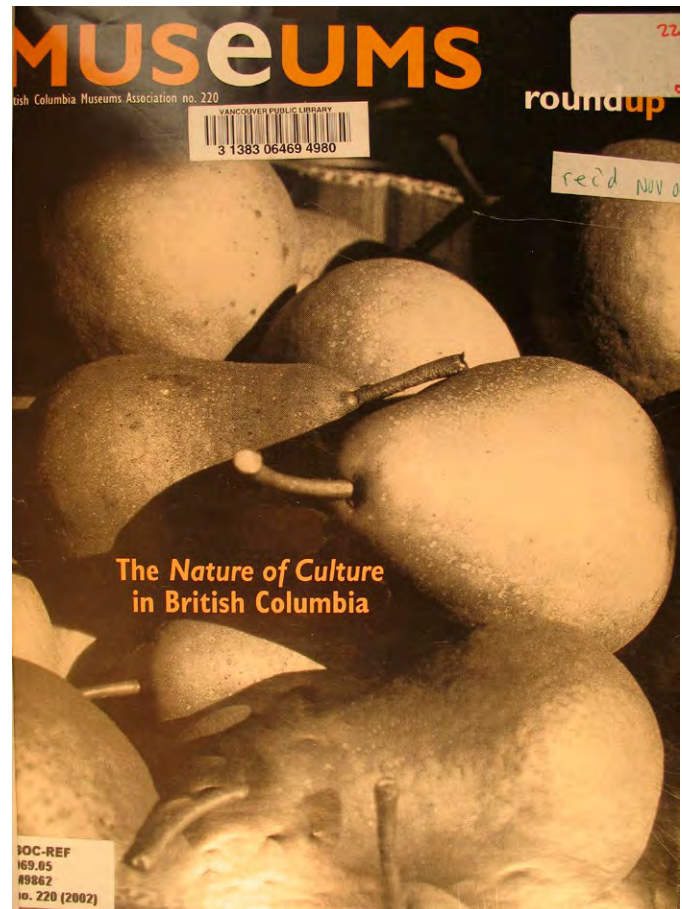
Below right: Fall 2002 saw the return of a regular editor and yet another redesign, this time into a glossy magazine format with a full colour cover.

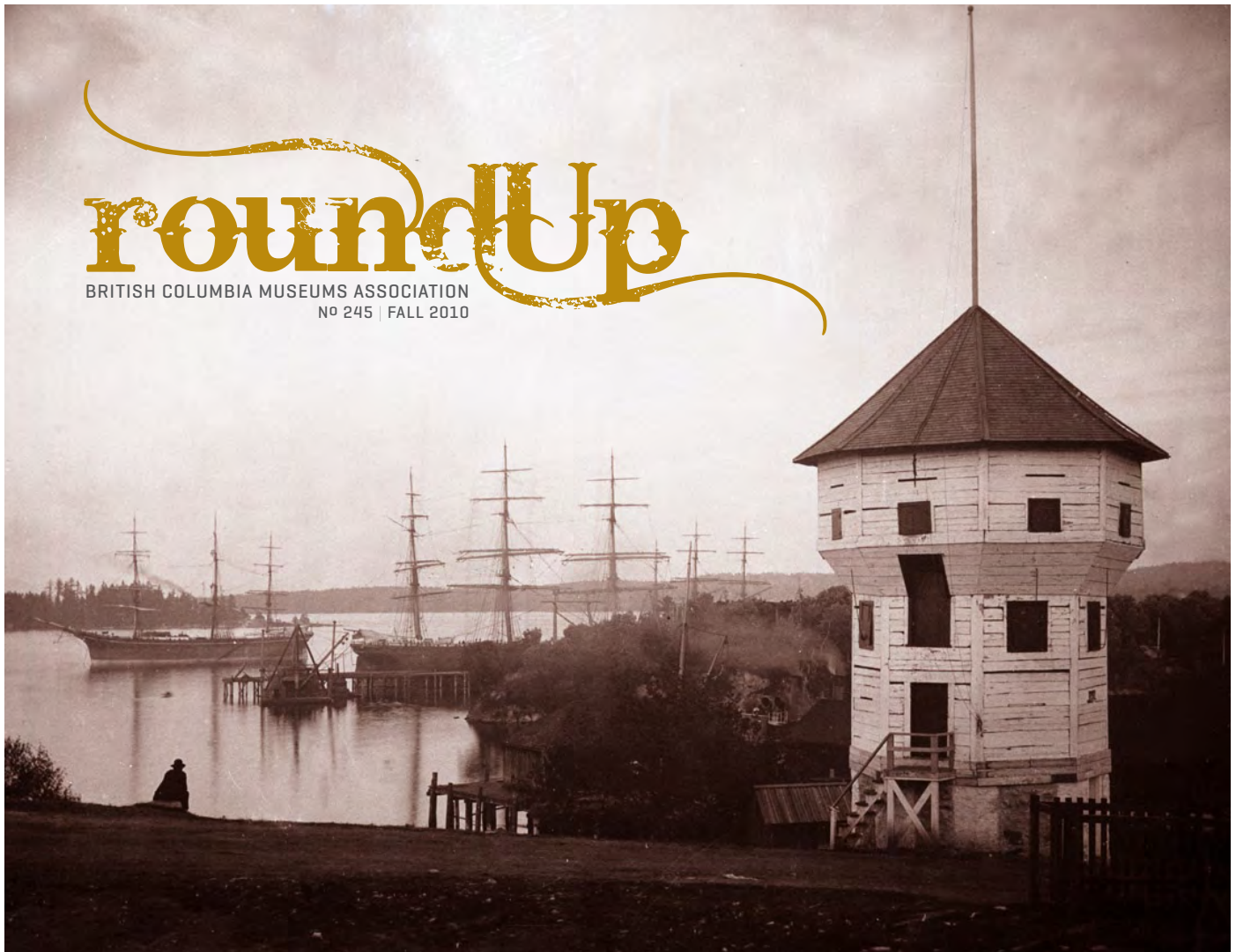
Below left: Roundup after its 1984 redesign.

Owl recently sat down for lunch at Willie's Bakery and Café with **Rick Goodacre**, Executive Director of the Heritage Society of BC.

Rick, am I correct that you have now been the Executive Director at Heritage BC for over 20 years? Tell us how your career path led you to this work.

That's right, Owl. I started with Heritage BC in September, 1990. I didn't set out to work in heritage conservation. I thought I was going to be an anthropologist, but along the way I had brief encounters with museums while I was a student - the Royal BC Museum in 1972 and the Burke Museum at the University of Washington in 1976. So when a job came up in 1987 at what was then known as the BC Forest Museum, it wasn't too much of a stretch for me. I have been working in the heritage field ever since.





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Those phone interviews were the best part of my time as editor. I had some very meaningful and engaging conversations with professionals I had long admired. Many of my lunch dates have since retired. Jenifer Iredale and Rick Goodacre stand out as some of my favorite lunchers, both

of them deeply reflective and optimistic about leaving their work in the hands of a new generation of professionals.

Jane Lemke and Shannon Bettles started as managing editor and graphic designer respectively in 2015. They have again re-worked *Roundup*. The magazine has returned to its roots as a key part of communicating the BCMA's programs and activities to the museum community, while remaining a place to learn and share.

Above: *Roundup* was re-launched as an e-publication in Fall 2010. It included a new logo, and several new features.

Lisa Codd is the owner and principal of Shared Solutions, a museum consulting company specializing in collections management. She is also the Curator of the Burnaby Village Museum, and a former BCMA Council member. She completed an M.A. (History) at Simon Fraser University, and a Diploma in Cultural Resource Management at the University of Victoria.