



# The ASBC Pages

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

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### *The Archaeological Society of BC has reached 50 years!*

After a short hiatus the Society and its journal, the Midden, are back up and running. The new executive is now based in Victoria. The transition was aided by the last acting President, Janice Graff, who kept the society afloat through a period of inactivity. Our current executive is as follows: President, Jacob Earnshaw (MA UVic, Golder Associates); Financial Secretary, Tom Bown (BSc RPBio, NRCan and volunteer researcher at Royal BC Museum); Membership Secretary, Nicole Westre (MA UVic, Golder Associates); Midden Representative, Dr. Genevieve Hill (PhD, Anthropology Collection Manager and Researcher at the Royal BC Museum); Recording Secretary, Callum Abbott (MA Candidate UVic); Member at Large, Jenny Cohen (MA UVic, Millenia Research); Member at Large, Shauna Kirby (BA UVic, Golder Associates); Member at Large, Colton Vogelaar (MA Candidate UVic).

Our immediate goal of solidifying the Society's foundations has been partially completed. The ASBC nearly lost its standing as a registered charity which would have meant surrendering our finances and completely starting over. Our application for reinstatement, along with a \$500 penalty, has been submitted and we are hopeful for a positive result.

We are pleased that within the first few months of 2016, we have had 55 members sign up. We are hopeful that by re-establishing the Midden and expanding our services more members will sign up.

This issue of The Midden signifies a return of the journal after a three-year hiatus. The Midden will be published twice a year for the foreseeable future. The journal will be published in PDF format, how-

ever we will print a limited run of hardcopy colour issues for circulation to institutional subscribers and members who are willing to pick them up from our monthly lectures. We are also in the process of digitizing the 50 year archive of Midden Journals and have partnered with the University of Victoria Library to host them. By the end of this year all back-issues will be available online.

Finally, we are in the process of updating the stagnant [asbc.bc.ca](http://asbc.bc.ca) website. The redesigned website will link viewers to the newest Midden issues, as well as the Midden archive. It will also highlight upcoming talks, workshops, and events, and allow for easier membership renewal. We also hope to host an active blog and multimedia page.

We have conducted a monthly lecture series at the University of Victoria between September and May. In October of last year we participated in the BC Archaeology Forum in Vancouver, and in May of this year we attended the Canadian Archaeological Association Conference in Whitehorse. With the passing of long-time member Gerald Merner, we established the Gerald Merner Memorial Field School award for a student participating in their first Archaeological field school. Elisa Moes, an undergraduate in UVic's Anthropology Department, was the first recipient. Her reflection on her field school experience on the central coast of BC can be found in this issue.

Our short-term goals are twofold: we aim to increase membership and to offer more services and opportunities to members of the Society. We feel there is great interest in the Society but in recent years the Society has not offered enough in the way of hands-on learning opportunities to students, professionals and the public. In the long term we hope to create partnerships with other archaeological and scientific institutions in and around the province and beyond, to

start archaeological projects providing members with opportunities to participate, to resurrect the lecture series in Vancouver, and to encourage the emergence of new society chapters throughout the province. Our aim this coming summer is to seek out external funding opportunities and partnerships to facilitate these changes.

Time will tell as to how our efforts pay off, but we are optimistic that the Society is well poised to promote and protect archaeology in British Columbia for the next 50 years. We will report back!

Best,

Jacob Earnshaw  
President, Archaeological Society of BC.

## **In Memorium: Professor Emeritus Donald H. Mitchell**

Becky Wigen  
& Quentin Mackie

Donald H. Mitchell, Professor Emeritus, a member of the Anthropology Department from its inception to his retirement in 1995, died unexpectedly on February 27, at his home in Eastend, Saskatchewan. Don is survived by his brother Howard, his daughter Lisa, and two grandchildren: Paloma and Anand.

Don initially took a BA in History and Economics (1955) and later a BComm (1958) from the University of British Columbia (UBC) with the intention of working in the family publishing business. However, an evening course in Anthropology from Carl Borden led to an MA in Anthropology (1963) from UBC, followed by a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Oregon in 1968 based on his dissertation *Archaeology of the Gulf of Georgia Area: A Natural Region and its Culture Types*. He joined the Anthropology and Sociology Department at UVic in 1965 as the second anthropologist and the first archaeologist in the department. He was instrumental in establishing the anthropology program as a four-field department in the Boasian tradition at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. He served as the founding Chair of the newly independent Department of Anthropology from 1973 to 1975 and Associate

Dean of Arts and Science from 1976 to 1979. A Professor in Anthropology, he retired from the University of Victoria in 1995.

Don did archaeological field work in many areas in the province, but became focused on Salish Sea and other Vancouver Island sites. Many of his articles are considered seminal works in BC archaeology. In particular he was interested in the economic and environmental aspects of archaeology. This led to interest in and collection of non-artifactual materials such as bones, shells, wood and seeds. He and his students were some of the first BC archaeologists to collect and analyze column and soil samples from midden sites. Don was also among the first archaeologists to insist on a meaningful role for First Nations in the archaeology of their long-term history. He was instrumental in developing an archaeological training program for Indigenous youth in the early 1970s and he routinely involved local First Nations band members in his archaeological excavations. His emphasis on detail, clarity of reporting and data-based conclusions was passed along to his graduate students, many of whom work in archaeology today. He was awarded the Smith-Wintemberg Award in 1998 by the Canadian Archaeological Association for outstanding contributions to the discipline of archaeology.

In addition to his academic career, Don was very involved for 28 years in the development of heritage legislation and policy in BC, contributing his expertise to the Heritage Conservation Act, as well as serving on the Archaeological Sites Advisory Board, the Provincial Heritage Advisory and the Heritage Trust. He also served as editor of the *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* and advisor to *Syesis* (a journal produced by the RBCM). In addition, he served on the British Columbia Department of Education's Elementary Social Studies Revision Committee, which introduced Anthropology and Social Science into the Elementary School curriculum. He also produced a variety of public-educational materials, including several slide sets for teaching and a video on basketry.

All of these accomplishments point to Don Mitchell's impressive and lasting impact on BC archaeology and the Department of Anthropology, but say little about the individual behind them. What we remember, as former graduate students and colleagues, is a man of patience and sharp intellect, with a dry, wicked sense of humour. We miss him very much.