



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Resiliency, courage and creativity

Taking on the role as Society Chair in 2021, I reflect on last year with gratitude and inspiration. We continued to challenge ourselves during a second year of a global pandemic and I believe we came through stronger, wiser, and more able to change when needed.

Our strength lies in our people and partners, whose commitment to forge a path to success knows no bounds. On behalf of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society Board of Directors, I'd like to express my deepest appreciation for the following. To our Society staff and their strength to stay the course and learn from valuable lessons in 2020. They stepped up and adapted to new ways to bring value to all aspects of running a unique operation such as this site. To our volunteers as well, who returned to our site to welcome back groups near the end of 2021, you continue to inspire all of us.

Our partnership with Parks Canada was and continues to be critical to our focus on delivering programs safely and in line with our strategic plan. We are truly grateful for their support and guidance and are proud to manage this National Historic site on their behalf.

To my fellow board and committee members. Your commitment to support staff, and to provide valuable insight went a long way to keep us thriving during 2021. You consistently raised the bar, and I am honoured to serve with you.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't call out the expert leadership of our Executive Director, Stephanie Halapija. Her work with staff, volunteers, partners, and Parks Canada significantly contributed to the milestones we achieved in 2021. Her positive nature, expertise and unwavering dedication to this site keeps us looking forward and focused.

We hope that you will enjoy reading this report which highlights all the good work behind telling stories about Canada's West Coast fishing industry for generations to come.

Elizabeth Batista

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Batista, *Chair*



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

When the site closed in 2020 and COVID-19 restrictions first hit, we did not expect to be affected by the pandemic for over two years. Through constant adaptations, changes and flexibility, the Society team persevered. The hard work and determination of our organization kept our site thriving, our visitors engaged, and our community enriched.

We saw the return of two successful pandemic-friendly installations, special programming, and welcomed back even more visitors than the year before. Through it all, the staff kept our site, visitors, and team safe while making history fun, and found new ways to represent our diverse fishing past. Without the commitment, passion and dedication of our front-line interpretive team and the support, creativity and resolve of our administrative team, we would not be celebrating all the successes we outline in this report. It has been a pleasure to work with this amazing team, and I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in this post-pandemic world.

Our Board of Directors remained energized and ready to lift up the staff and keep motivation high. The Board's unwavering support and commitment to our mission, to fostering Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and their out-of-the-box thinking have strengthened our organization and guided us through more stormy weather. Thank you for your contributions and for your support of myself and our talented team.

Parks Canada continues to be a strong partner as we worked through the unknown together for a second year. From assistance with staffing, pandemic resources, and asset maintenance, they have continued to play a critical role in the success of the site and the Society. On behalf of the team, we give thanks to all of the Parks Canada staff and in particular Kate Humble, who was the Acting National Historic Sites Manager for the better part of 2021.

As we march toward normalcy and post-pandemic life, and welcome the return of special events, school groups and public tours, I am filled with hope and feel that the potential of our site, our Society and our community will remain unmatched. I am confident that 2022 will be one of the best that the Society will experience, made possible by the foundation that was laid in 2021. After two years of challenges, restrictions and pivoting, I look forward to a calmer, brighter, and fun-filled year to come.



Sincerely,
Stephanie Halapija, *Executive Director*

THE GULF OF GEORGIA CANNERY NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Constructed in 1894, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery was one of fifteen canneries that once lined the banks of the Fraser River in Steveston.

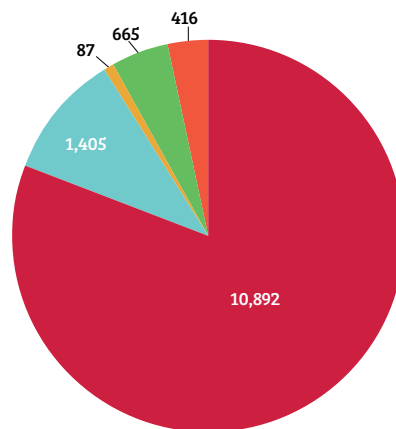
The facility canned salmon until 1930 when it was repurposed as a net loft, fresh fish depot, and later as a herring reduction plant. After operating for 85 years, the facility was designated a national historic site in 1976 and opened to the public in 1994.

Located on the South Arm of the Fraser River, the site is a hallmark of the historic fishing village of Steveston, located in the southwest corner of Richmond BC.

Permanent exhibits include a functioning salmon canning line, a herring reduction plant, and fishing methods used on the West Coast. These are complemented by a flexible feature space displaying various temporary exhibitions connected to the Society's mission, including the 2021-23 feature exhibition *Waves of Innovation: Stories from the West Coast*.

2021 VISITATION TOTAL 13,465

GENERAL ADMISSION	10,892
PROMOTIONAL ADMISSION	1,405
SPECIAL EVENTS	87
SCHOOL PROGRAMS	665
GROUPS AND RENTALS	416





SOCIETY OVERVIEW

About Us

Established in 1986, the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society is an independent, non-profit society and registered charity whose mission honours the importance of Canada's West Coast fishing history.

Working in partnership with Parks Canada, the Society is responsible for the operation of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site. The Society endeavors to interpret the history of West Coast fishing by sharing stories of the fishing industry and communities through exhibitions, collections, programs, and events.

Board of Directors

Elected May 2021

Board Chair	Elizabeth Batista
First Vice-Chair	Joan Bennett
Second Vice-Chair	Susan Steine
Treasurer	Ryan Garnett
Secretary	Whitney Enns
Past Chair	Kit Grauer

Directors

Jim Kojima
Karen Lee
Peter Liu
Geoff Matheson
Ralph Turner
Mark Turpin

Ex Officios

National Historic Sites
Manager, Coastal BC Field
Unit, Parks Canada

SOCIETY ACTIVITIES

In 2021, we faced a second year dealing with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Initially, the Society planned on resuming regular programming in the Summer. However, in both Spring and Fall, pandemic restrictions continued to limit site operations.

As in 2020, the Society staff worked very hard to keep our team and our site safe. In accordance with WorkSafe BC, and as guided by the Parks Canada Visitor Services Resumption Strategy, the Society continued the implementation of our COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Our front-line team was faced with many challenges that come with welcoming the public to the Cannery during a pandemic. They understood that people arrive with their own thoughts and expectations, and that it is up to the team to facilitate a positive visitor experience. This wasn't always easy to do, but thanks to the adaptability of the team, we were able to continue engaging visitors in a safe manner and found new ways to activate the site for new audiences and for our local community.

Due to the restrictions, we were unable to offer a full summer experience with public tours for a second year. However, the absence of regular programming allowed our team time for reflection and revision and afforded an incredible opportunity for the organization. Following the direction of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, and changing narratives and standards being implemented in museums, art galleries and archives across the country, the Society increased our commitment to sharing diverse voices, new histories, narratives, and varied stories. This commitment to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) has challenged the Society to ensure our actions and programming fosters diverse, equal, and accessible representation. We continue to ensure that all of our members, staff, visitors, and volunteers have access to the same opportunities to participate and to feel included in our site. We look forward to sharing some of these new initiatives, program offerings, and exhibitions in 2022, as we continue to innovate and move the organization forward.



Photographs: Heritage Interpreters in their heritage uniforms during the Summer season





Photograph, left: Seining salmon on the *Eva D. II*, Lower Johnstone Straights, BC, ca. 1940s. GOGCS, G2005.050.010.



Photograph, right: Crew on the seiner *Kynoch* brailing fish into the hold, near Bella Bella, BC. GOGCS, 2002.003.001J.

Changes to the Cannery Crew

In a year of change around us, the Cannery Crew welcomed new faces and said good-bye to a longtime team member.

After eight years with the Society, our former Marketing and Visitor Services Manager Mimi Horita moved on to a position with the City of Richmond Heritage Sites at the end of 2021. Over her time with the Society, Mimi's work transformed our offer, elevated our visitor experience, and brought our organization to new heights. International tourism and the Cannery's reputation as a can't-miss destination were developed and nurtured through her unique experience and passion for the stories we tell. Mimi worked to create a seamless visitor experience with a top-notch Visitor Services team, supporting our Heritage Interpreters and full-time staff in equal measure. Always a bright spot at the site, her passion for the Cannery, Steveston, and ability to champion the stories of our Japanese Canadian heritage made both the site and the Society better. We look forward to continuing working together and wish her the best of luck with the next chapter of her career.

With Mimi's departure, our long-time Head Interpreter Andrea Park moved into the role of Manager of Visitor Services. Andrea has been with the Society for 7 years, working with the Heritage Interpreters to provide excellent visitor experience. She brings her background as a manager at the Vancouver Aquarium, her knowledge and love of the ocean, biodiversity, and significant experience in both interpretive science, education, and program delivery to the role. We are very excited to welcome a key team member to our managerial team and have already seen her positive effect on our visitors and site.

In September, Gillian Chan joined the team as the new Public Programs Coordinator. As a recent UBC graduate and Richmond local, Gillian is excited to work on different community partnerships through events and programming. She assisted with our annual Halloween installation, *The Haunted Sea*, and organized the *Festival of Trees* in December. In 2022, Gillian is especially excited to bring back *Welcoming the Sun*, and to build upon the *Fish Tales* partnership project with the UBC Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies.

Growing Membership & Society Volunteers

In 2021, we welcomed 50 new individual and corporate members, finishing the year with 291 active members.

Society membership supports the development of our programs, the activation of our mission, and allows us to continue bringing the stories of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery National Historic Site to life. The Society would like to thank and welcome both new and returning members for all your support during these unprecedented times and look forward to many new members in 2022.

The Society was thrilled to welcome the return of volunteers in 2021 as pandemic restrictions were eased and vaccines became available.

We are grateful for our volunteers who have remained active and especially to those who have volunteered to help on site or from home in activities that included gallery attendant, gift shop, collections work and research. Many of the accomplishments in our report would not have been possible without all the support, time, and assistance of our fantastic volunteers!



■ Andrea Park,
Manager of Visitor Services

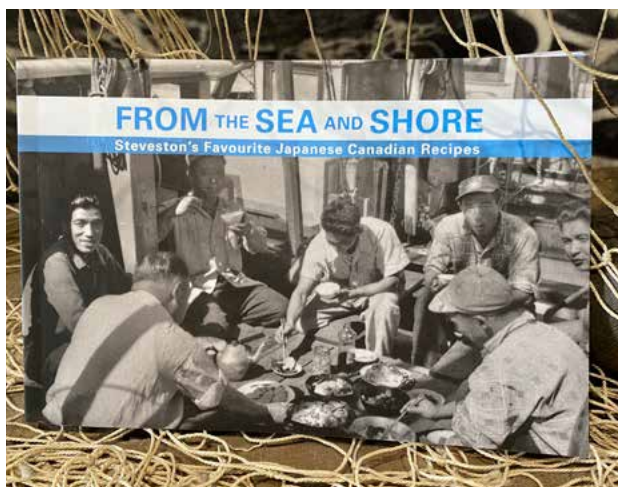


■ Gillian Chan,
Public Programs Coordinator



GIFT SHOP REPORT

COVID-19 continued to be a challenge for the Cannery Store in 2021.



Photograph: *From the Sea and Shore* cookbook, a Cannery Store best-seller in 2021.

The year started out strong but worries over the Delta variant slowed traffic just after Spring Break. Fortunately, by the end of summer we saw revenue continue to climb, in some months almost to pre-pandemic levels.

This was greatly helped by the release of the cookbook “From the Sea and Shore” authored by Kelvin Higo and distributed by Tonari Gumi, the Japanese Community Volunteer Association. The book combines local recipes with the story of the Japanese-Canadian community in Steveston. The store sold an amazing 630 copies at \$20 each! This puts it just behind candy sticks (at 3 for a \$1) as our best-selling item last year.

Supply chain issues challenged us in getting popular items into the store and wholesale price increases are a weekly reminder of the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Our fantastic store volunteers continued to assist with store operations. We could not do it without them!

COLLECTIONS

The Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society cares for over 7,500 artifacts in two collections: one belonging to Parks Canada, and the other to the Society.

In addition to these objects, the Society maintains a Reference Library and an Archive of historical documents, images, oral histories, reference books, and more. Collectively, these items tell the story of the West Coast fishing industry, and reflect the people, places, and events that were integral to this history.

In 2021 the Society continued to expand our program of collecting oral history interviews with people involved in the fishing and canning industry by branching into the realm of video interviews. We also partnered with Tourism Richmond to create an immersive value-added tour (to be offered in Summer 2022) called *Steveston Stories: Community Treasures*. This new tour will feature stories from long-term Society members and Steveston residents, as well as an exclusive look into our artifact storage areas with our Collections Manager.



Photograph: Teko Kumagai demonstrates how to mend holes in a gillnet during filming of the net hanging demo with Ken Takahashi in August 2021.

Photograph: Ken Takahashi shows how to set up a net hanging bench while being filmed and interviewed for the Society's oral history collection in August 2021.



PUBLIC PROGRAMS & EVENTS

**In April, we opened a new feature exhibition
*Waves of Innovation: Stories of the West Coast.***



An exploration of the innovations in the West Coast commercial fishing industry, *Waves of Innovation* highlights the cause and effect of changes in energy, preservation, and fishing methods, and their impacts on people's lives.

In lieu of an in-person exhibit opening, Collection Manager Heidi Rampfl filmed a virtual tour of the exhibit that premiered during Doors Open Richmond. This feature exhibition will be showing until Spring of 2023.

The Society was delighted to welcome back educational programs in 2021. During the hiatus, the Audience Engagement team re-designed the *Cannery Quest* program to focus on bringing fun to the site for our smallest visitors. The renewal of two popular school programs, *Cannery Stories* and *Machines at Work*, brought different voices and approaches to the program content, and were well-received by returning teachers and students.

For Spring Break, a new self-guided activity, *Be a Cannery Owner for a Day*, invited kids to follow along fun tasks outlined in an activity booklet, imagining the choices they would make to ensure the successful operation of their cannery.

Canada Day returned to the Steveston in the form of a virtual Salmon Festival. Our talented heritage interpreters prepared a fun video entry for the "virtual parade", and won the "Sturgeon Award" for best heritage entry.

Finally, in 2021 we embarked on a new partnership with the University of British Columbia's Initiative for Student Teaching and Research in Chinese Canadian Studies (UBC INSTRCC) that has resulted in the creation of an exciting new project, *Fish Tales*. Created in collaboration with Cannery staff, members of INSTRCC, and a team of talented students from Dr. Henry Yu's Asian Canadian Migration Studies (ACAM 390A) class, *Fish Tales* is a community-based story gathering project that aims to add more diverse voices to the stories of West Coast fishing presented at our site through discussions surrounding fish and seafood consumption. In Fall 2021, a pilot version of the project was launched. This work was mainly accomplished by the UBC student team, and included filming and curating a collections of posts for the Cannery's Instagram account. We look forward to continuing our partnership with UBC INSTRCC and collaborating on this project in 2022 and years to come.



Photographs, from top to bottom: First Nations artist Christine Mackenzie with her beautiful artwork *Salmon's Connection to Mother Earth*; the *Preservation* section in the *Waves of Innovation* exhibit; a screenshot of a *Fish Tales* Instagram story post created by UBC INSTRCC students.

Holiday Installations and Special Programs

The Society's annual Halloween installation, *The Haunted Sea*, returned better than ever with the help of volunteers like Art Nishi who made us beautiful back lit text panels.

Visitors enjoyed our family-friendly Halloween installation, creatively decorated in an undersea theme with upcycled plastics. Over 2,000 people enjoyed the month-long event, and learned how to help keep plastics out of the ocean.

For Culture Days 2021, *River's End Fisher Poets* returned to the Cannery after a two-year hiatus. A banner event organized by the talented Wilfred Wilson and hosted by the Society staff, included performers both in-person and pre-recorded, who shared stories and poems about fishing life to a captivated audience. The Society also hosted the documentary film premiere of *Sisu*, by Emily Carr University of Art and Design student filmmaker Lauren Olson, about the unique community in Richmond's Finn Slough.

The Society was also pleased to present the return of the annual *Steveston Festival of Trees*, which features holiday trees decorated by local merchants and organizations. With COVID restrictions in mind, we offered an online option for voters to choose their favourite trees, in addition to voting in person. Over 2,000 votes were counted, and the top three votes went to River's Edge Girl Guides, London Farm Society, and With Our Own Two Hands pre-school.



Photographs: Scenes from our Halloween installation, *The Haunted Sea*.

Photographs: Steveston Festival of Trees.



FUNDING

Overall revenue through admissions, international travel, groups (including school and special interest) as well as rentals and supplementary income, dropped approximately 70% compared to 2019's pre-pandemic revenue, but remained steady compared to 2020's overall revenue.

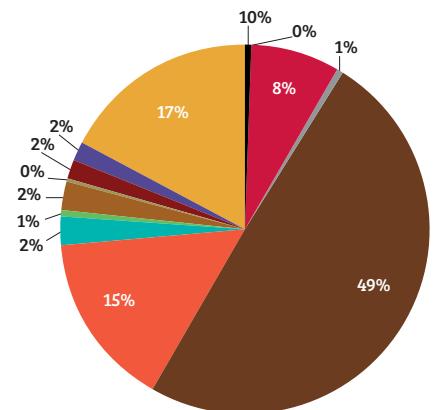
For the second year in a row, fiscal challenges were greatly reduced with the support of the Government of Canada through the Canadian Emergency Wage Subsidy, which allowed the Society to support our staff and their work.

Strong Gift Shop and alternative revenue sources have also gone a long way to help offset revenue loss, to support the Society's continued operation of the Cannery.

Our partner Parks Canada has also remained an important funder for the Society and, per our contract, did not reduce any funding in 2021. Parks Canada provided further support through three paid summer student positions. We thank them for their continued support of the Society and our team.

2021 REVENUE

MEMBERSHIPS	\$6,761
DONATIONS	\$1,226
GENERAL ADMISSIONS	\$78,140
GROUP ADMISSIONS	\$6,656
PARKS CANADA CONTRACTS	\$500,000
GIFT SHOP SALES	\$155,771
PARKING REVENUE	\$23,856
SITE RENTALS	\$7,321
OTHER REVENUE	\$24,672
SPONSORSHIPS - GENERAL	\$1,500
GRANTS - GENERAL	\$18,153
GRANTS - GAMING	\$15,000
FUNDING - CANADA EMERGENCY WAGE SUBSIDY	\$174,320
Total: \$1,013,376	



2021 SUPPORTERS

Grantors

Province of British Columbia, Government of Canada – Canada Summer Jobs Program and New Horizons for Seniors Program

Media Sponsors

Steveston Insider, Tourism Richmond

Donors

Hildegard Thiessen & Veronika Schimak, Richard Gregory, Jack Dlugan, Anne & Ed Ikeda, and Elizabeth Harrower

2021 IN REVIEW

2021 was another year of unprecedented challenges and unknowns. Yet we are grateful for the successes that we were able to celebrate despite the difficult year. Here are some highlights.



MORE THAN 13,000 ADMISSIONS

Almost 4,000 more admissions compared to 2020.

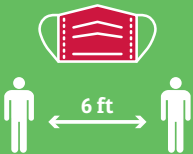


RETURN OF GROUP PROGRAMS

Summer camps, group tours, and school programs all returned to the site in 2021.

50+ NEW SOCIETY MEMBERS

1400+ VOLUNTEER HOURS



2 COVID-FRIENDLY INSTALLATIONS

with the continuation of *The Haunted Sea* and *Steveston Festival of Trees*.



3 IMPROVED SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Cannery Quest, Cannery Stories, and Machines at Work



RETURN OF SPECIAL PROGRAMMING

River's End Fisher Poets, partnership with Richmond Gateway Theatre, *Sisu* film premiere, and other fun programs were offered for visitors this year.



LOOKING FORWARD

2022 will be a year of ongoing adaptation and change as we move past the restrictions and effects of COVID-19 on our site.

The Society is excited to continue the important work outlined in our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.

Despite the inability to accurately predict growth, we are hopeful that recovery from the pandemic will bring more visitors and allow for more programming onsite. There is a lot to look forward to as we embark on a new year and some return of normalcy. Through new educational offerings, continuing to build on past successful events, and redefining the visitor experience at our site, there is much to look forward to in 2022 for the Society, our site, and our community.



RETURN OF EVENTS

Easter at the Cannery and Welcoming the Sun will be presented in addition to The Haunted Sea, River's End Fisher Poets and Steveston Festival of Trees this year.



ONE NEW SCHOOL PROGRAM



**GROW VISITATION BY 5,000
GENERAL ADMISSIONS OVER 2021**



**GROW GIFT SHOP SALES
BY 10% OVER 2021**



RE-LAUNCH THE CANNERY SUMMER EXPERIENCE

Guided tours, machine demos, film showings, costumed interpretation, and other new exciting programming will return to the site this Spring



ONE NEW SITE TOUR

A new tour focused on the people, communities and social history of the West Coast Fishing Industry will be offered in 2022.



Photograph: Robert Karliner and crew member clearing Sockeye salmon out of his net during the Adams River "great cycle" in 1942. GOGCS, G2013.001.038.



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