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# AMRC Newsletter

Alexandro Malaspina Research Centre, Vancouver Island University, Nanaimo, BC, Canada

## “Sources of Identity” Speaker Series

This Spring the AMRC, through its Heritage Research Group, organised a series of free public lectures on the wide-ranging theme “Sources of Identity.”

The series got off to a fine start with Peter Clarke, former Master of Trinity Hall and Professor of Modern British History at the University of Cambridge, on *The Identity of the English-Speaking Peoples*, a talk which drew on his work on Winston Churchill and his recent book *The Last Thousand Days of the British Empire*.

That was followed by Dr. Maria Tippet, also of Cambridge, who

spoke on *Canadian Art and National Identity*, considering the interrelated rôles of settler, indigenous and foreign cultural traditions.

Sheila Rankin Zerr and Glennis Zilm of the UBC School of Nursing presented a fashion show, with commentary, of historical nursing uniforms of the last 150 years, pointing out the different professional identities implied by the different approaches to costume.

The final evening was taken up by the 2009 Malaspina Lecture, in which Dr. Charlotte Côté of

the American Indian Studies Department at the University of Washington, along with a number of representatives of the First Nations in question, discussed the living significance of whaling practices in Makah and Nuuchah-Nulth cultural identity.

The series provided a fascinating example of what can be achieved through the interdisciplinary study of a single theme, even articulated as variously as this one was by the different presenters. We were extremely encouraged by the results, and look forward to planning similar endeavours in the future.

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## E.J. Hughes Mural Now Restored: Opening Soon

The late E.J. Hughes painted his mural “Malaspina Sketching the Galleries” in 1938. This youthful work, picturing a fictional event, has been lost to the world since it was covered by renovations in the Malaspina Hotel several decades ago. Rescued about ten years ago during subsequent building work, the painting has recently been restored by Cheryle Harrison, and will be unveiled in its new location at the Nanaimo Conference Centre on May 14.

For the following three weeks, the Nanaimo Art Gallery is putting on a comprehensive

Hughes exhibition, and many related events, including some educational presentations dealing with Hughes the artist, the history of the mural and its restoration.

AMRC director John Black will give a talk explaining the historical truth behind the depiction: it was not Malaspina but José Cardero, artist on the 1792 expedition of the *Sutil* and *Mexicana*, who first sketched the Galleries on Gabriola Island. Cardero's sketch is lost, but the Museo Naval in Madrid has a copy of it by Ferdinando Brambilla. In conjunction with this talk the Nanaimo Museum will put on a small exhibition, curated by

Robin Inglis, of images deriving from that expedition.

It has long been a goal of the AMRC to support the recovery of this lost artwork, and we like to express our deep gratitude to those who have made it possible: the City of Nanaimo, its Community Archives, Art Gallery and Museum, along with restorer Cheryle Harrison.

For further details of the events associated with the unveiling, please visit the website of the Nanaimo Art Gallery at: <http://www.nanaimoartgallery.com/>.

AMRC Website: [web.viu.ca/black/amrc/index.htm](http://web.viu.ca/black/amrc/index.htm)