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AMRC Newsletter

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

Malaspina Lecturer for 2017

On March 23 the Malaspina Lecture was given by Michael Layland on the topic of his latest book, *A Perfect Eden: Encounters by Early Explorers of Vancouver Island*, published by Touchwood Editions.

Born and educated in England, Michael Layland trained as an officer and mapmaker in the Royal Engineers. In his civilian career, he continued with mapping-related projects in South and Central America, Arabia, North and West Africa, and Antarctica. He has researched extensively the exploration and cartographic history of Vancouver Island, where he has lived for the past 25 years.

His previous book, *The Land of Heart's Delight, Early Maps and Charts of Vancouver Island*, is now in its second printing. Released in 2013, it was short-listed for the Bill Duthie Booksellers' Choice award in the BC Book Prizes, and for the Victoria Butler Book Prize. It also placed second in the BC Historical Federation's Lieutenant Governor's prizes for historical writing. It is a perfect companion to *A Perfect Eden*.

Layland served as president of the [Friends of the BC Archives](#) and the [Victoria Historical Society](#), and in the Historical Map Society of BC. He is a member of the [Society for the History of Discoveries](#) and the [International Map Collectors' Society](#), and reviews books for *British Columbia History* magazine. His articles on exploration history have appeared in international encyclopaedias, including the [Oxford Companion to World Exploration](#).

Acknowledged as one of Vancouver Island's foremost map historians, Layland has also collected and researched old maps of the region, and published reproduction maps and panoramas of historical note.

His latest book gives a thorough survey of early European navigation in the north Pacific, expressed in colourful prose and accompanied by excellent illustrations. The lecture was no less provocative, and the audience showed its appreciation through a lively discussion at its conclusion.

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Other News

* AMRC Director John Black has retired from his position as Professor of Liberal Studies and Philosophy and Dean of Social Sciences at Vancouver Island University. He will remain Director of the Centre, however, and is looking forward to getting back to the scholarly work he had to lay aside during his administrative appointment.

* The void created by the sad death last year of Dario Manfredi has been filled by two prominent figures in the world of Lunigiana museums. Rossana Piccioli has become President of the Alessandro Malaspina Foundation, and she and Francesca Guastali Co-Directors of the Malaspina Archive and Museum. On April 29 the Foundation held a successful symposium marking Manfredi's immense contribution to Malaspinian Studies.

AMRC Website: web.viu.ca/black/amrc/index.htm