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# AMRC Newsletter

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

## Updating the Centre

The process of renewing the mandate of the AMRC so that it serves a wider range of interests, is now in an advanced stage,

The newly appointed Director and current Associated Scholar Dr. David Livingstone, of the Departments of Liberal Studies and Political Studies, has been meeting with retiring Director Dr. John Black, Honorary Research Associate Robin Fisher, and the staff of the Office for Scholarship, Research and Creative Activity in order to prepare a proposal on the new mandate for the approval of the University Senate..

The proposal is that the Centre will be devoted to the relevance of a broad and deep liberal education to active participation in democratic society. In this way the Centre will continue to honour the legacy of Alexandro Malaspina and his contributions not only in navigation and constructive contact with the First People's around the globe, but also to philosophy, politics, economics, linguistics, ethnography, the physical sciences and literary criticism, it is possible that the proposal will include a name-change, resulting in a more descriptive title.

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## A Quarter-Century of Malaspina Research

The AMRC was formed in 1998 by its first Director Dr. Russell McNeil and Dr. John Black. Under their leadership began 25 years of research into and popularisation of the life, works and historical context of Alexandro Malaspina. The first project, a translation of the biography of Malaspina written in Spanish by Dario Manfredi, the late Director of the Centro di Studi Malaspiniani in Mulazzo, Italy (Malaspina's birthplace), was completed by Teresa and Donald Kirschner of Simon Fraser University.

The second book-length translation, completed by John Black and Dr. Oscar Clemotte and published by Edwin Mellen Press, was of Malaspina's essay *Mediation on Beauty in Nature*. A paper by John Black describing this work and its relevance to 18<sup>th</sup>-century aesthetics was translated into Spanish and published as part of the results of the highly successful Malaspina 2010 project in Spain.

The Centre also created the only English-language website focusing on the forgotten navigator and thinker (see link below). This site contains a vast number of other translations, of the letters and other writings of Malaspina as well as newspapers articles

written as his five-year scientific and political voyage unfolded. Many other scholars around the world have contributed papers, translations and other materials for the website, and are thanked in its "Friends" page.

Perhaps the most satisfying area of activity of the Centre has been the provision at VIU of free public lectures by a broad array of academics and other enthusiasts. There were too many to list here, but the details can be found on the "Events" page of the website. These lectures were suspended at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, and sadly have not resumed.

A word must be said finally about the financial contributions from many donors, prominent among whom were members of the broader international Malaspina family, which, along with grants from more local sources, have sustained the Centre's activity. It is difficult to express in words the gratitude felt by the Centre's members for the generosity thus shown, but it is deeply felt.

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