

## Museum a treasure

I wonder how many of your readers know that here in Victoria we have one of the finest maritime museums on the continent. It occupies a prime historic building (the former Court-house), but unfortunately it is off the main track behind the Post Office, tucked away in Bastion Square. Because of its low profile, many citizens seem to be totally unaware of the interesting treasures it contains.

A day or two ago I paid this museum a visit. I was delighted by the freshness of approach behind its various displays. There was a delightful "Imagination Corner" for young visitors. Here, they would find a stout work table, real tools and masses of ready-to-be-cut-to-size bits of colored cardboard, miniature wheels, ropes and assorted gadgets from which to build their own boats or whats-its. For this hands-on fun, the museum's official model-maker was ready to assist.

In another corner a genial gentleman, dressed as a jack tar, played his accordion and sang lively sea shan-

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ties. I noticed that several of the casual visitors enjoyed joining in with "Blow the Man Down."

In all the galleries there were splendid displays devoted to various phases of British Columbia's long maritime history. But the specialty for this season was the gallery set aside for toys of a sea-going character. Here the cases displayed numerous tiny sea-goers and sea-related tradespeople, all posed in natural working attitudes.

In another case was a splendid miniature reproduction of a naval color guard, such as one would see at Esquimalt naval base on royal occasions. Some public-spirited anonymous collector has lent this unique collection for the holiday period.

In the neighboring display case there was a delightful collection of toy

boats including barges, yachts, canoes and rowboats, many of them the handiwork of local people, who have lent them for others to enjoy.

I urge all my fellow-citizens to hurry down to enjoy the Christmas glamor of the Maritime Museum.

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