

## Victoria Connections to Race to the End of the Earth

May 17-October 14, 2013

### Only Canadian stop for the exhibition

The Royal BC Museum in Victoria will be the only Canadian stop for *Race to the End of the Earth*. The exhibition was designed and produced by the American Museum of National History in New York, in collaboration with the Royal BC Museum and the Musée des Confluences in Lyon France. Victoria has unique links to the expedition in the form of local relatives of the crew, historical correspondence between Victoria families and the explorers, experts involved in the creation of the exhibition, and the original sled flag from Scott's hut is in the Royal BC Museum archives.

### Three members of Scott's 1911-1912 Antarctic expedition have a direct link to Victoria

- Robert F. Scott visited Victoria in 1889/1890 aboard HMS Amphion as a Royal Navy Lieutenant. During this time he developed a friendship with Kathleen O'Reilly and other family members who lived at Point Ellice House. Over the next decades, Scott corresponded with members of the O'Reilly family.
- Cecil H. Meares (dog procurer and handler) moved to Oak Bay in the late 1920s, introduced the Himalayan blue poppy (*Meconopsis baileyi*) to the area and died in Victoria in 1937. His sledge pennant, correspondence, medals, and other personal items from his estate were donated to the Royal BC Museum.
- Charles S. Wright (Canadian member and scientist, later Sir Charles S. Wright, KCB, OBE, MC) worked for a time in the 1950s and 1960s at the Pacific Naval Laboratory in Esquimalt, and at UBC and Royal Roads before retiring to Salt Spring Island. He died in Victoria in 1975. Cartoonist Adrian Raeside is his grandson.

### Meares' 100-year-old expedition pennant on display

In a tradition that started with British exploration of the Arctic, sledges flew colourful silk flags as the officers trekked over the ice. Symbols of meaning to each man were incorporated in the hand-crafted designs. Meares' pennant, now in the Royal BC Museum's collection, features the St. George Cross for England, while the deep blue background symbolizes loyalty and truth. The mermaid and motto, meaning "Trust to all Providence," is from Meares' family coat of arms. Pennants were handmade flags that officers flew from their sleds so they could be seen in a blizzard. Only a few have survived.

### Royal BC Museum Conservator worked to conserve expedition huts in Antarctica

Jana Stefan, Conservator and Exhibit Arts Technician at the Royal BC Museum, worked with an international team during two six-month terms in Antarctica to conserve, document and preserve the contents of the explorers' original huts. During these terms with the New Zealand Antarctica Heritage Trust, Stefan lived in tents on the sea ice, had little contact with the outside world, and maintained a blog on the Royal BC Museum website. Videos from her work will be part of the exhibit and Stefan will speak in the QUEST speaker series on October 3, 2013.