

NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

BRITANNIA MINE MUSEUM



BRITANNIA MINE MUSEUM 2010 PRESS KIT

Britannia Mine Museum
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www.britanniamuseum.ca



Britannia Mine Museum Fact Sheet

The Britannia Mine Museum is a newly transformed, historical destination on Britannia Beach located just 10 minutes south of Squamish. Revitalized in 2010 with a major \$14.7-million three-phase redevelopment project, the reinvented Museum celebrates the contribution of mining and minerals to society, the history of the storied Britannia Beach community and the ideas and practices of environmental renewal and sustainability. It promotes mining awareness through fun educational programs, historic collection preservation and insightful public that enables guests to leave with a better understanding of mining in BC; past, present, and future.

The Museum also commemorates the accomplishments and ingenuity of Canada's mining pioneers and showcases the evolution of the mining industry, its advances and achievements. It highlights Canadian innovation and leadership in sustainable mining and resource development and environmental stewardship.

The Britannia Mine Museum, which is both a National Historic Site and a BC Historic Landmark, was established in 1971 and is a premier, non-profit organization governed by the Britannia Beach Historical Society.

Open seven days a week, the Museum offers exciting new and existing venues for exploration, discovery and local arts and culture, featuring:

- **The Beaty-Lundin Visitor Centre** – A brand new building visitors will experience when entering the museum. It houses several theatrical mining exhibits and a mineral gallery, a new theatre space, a gift shop and the Canadian Mining Hall of Fame where visitors can learn about Canadian mining pioneers.
- **The A-Z Administration Building** – The museum fully restored an original heritage building to create this new exhibition centre to showcase the stories of the Britannia Beach community during the 70 years it existed as a mining town.
- **The Historic Mill Building** - A National Historic Site and one of the last remaining gravity-fed concentrator mills in North America, the Mill Building is an awe-inspiring building that has been the symbol of Britannia throughout the years. Restored in 2007, each of the 14,416 panes of glass was hand-puttied into the frames to maintain its heritage.
- **The Underground Mine & Train Ride** – A memorable underground train ride deep inside a mountain mine where visitors will experience what life was like for miners back in the day.
- **The Village Board Walk & Gold Panning Area** – Stroll down the scenic boardwalk to experience the newly restored heritage buildings and feel the thrill of discovery when visitors find a glint of gold when panning for real gold.
- **Children's Play Area** – Young visitors can play in this expanded sunlit, protected, mining-themed play area where they can have fun in a Super Haul truck and imagine themselves as miners using toy diggers, trucks and hoppers.
- **The Event Plaza** – A new central gathering place where special events and demonstrations will be held.



- **Machine Shop** – The 1908 Machine Shop is home to a number of historic pieces of equipment and machines such as the restored ambulance car.
- **Core Sheds** – An immense archive of rock core samples drilled from the mountainside as you walk down from the underground mine.
- **EPCOR Britannia Mine Water Treatment Plant** - Represents Britannia's environmental remediation legacy. Britannia Mines had an environmental impact on Howe Sound due to acid rock drainage, which occurs naturally when rainwater reacts with oxygen and exposed minerals. The water treatment plant uses natural materials to filter minerals and neutralize surface water runoff collected from the area, resulting in clean water flowing into Howe Sound.

Statistics & Facts

Visitors: 32,000

Students Served Annually: 7,000

Membership: 300 members

Admission (includes HST):

- Adults (ages 19 and up): \$19.75
- Seniors (65+): \$14.90
- Students (with valid student ID): \$14.90
- Youths (ages 6 through 12): \$12.75
- Children aged 5 and under: Free
- Daily Family Rate (2 adults and up to 3 children): \$58.70

Hours of Operation:

- 7 days a week from Feb 1 to November 1, from 9:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.
- Winter season: Monday to Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., closed over the Christmas

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History of Britannia Mines

The mine's story began in 1888 when Alexander Forbes, an enterprising doctor originally from Scotland, was prospecting at Britannia Beach in search of fortune. A fortune he found almost by accident while hunting when he came upon a patch of mineralized rock. That chance event led to the opening of one of the largest copper mines in the world.

The Britannia Mining and Smelting Company first opened the Britannia Mines in 1904, and constructed the first ore processing plant - Mill 1. Improvements in the techniques of the mineral separation processes resulted in the upgrade of the mill to Mill 2 in 1916, capable of producing 2,000 tons of ore per day.

On March 21, 1915, a rock and snow slide destroyed the original 'Jane Camp', killing 56 men, women and children. Construction began immediately on a new, safer town 2,000 feet below the original town and became known as the 'Townsite' or 'Mount Sheer'.

Although Britannia and Mount Sheer town site were quite isolated with the area only accessible by boat until the railway and highway were built, life was never dull. Facilities included libraries, clubrooms, billiard rooms, swimming pools, tennis courts, a roller-skating rink and a bowling alley. A thriving social calendar saw sporting events, theatrical productions, dances, movies and parties held throughout the year.

In 1921, a fire destroyed Mill and in October of the same year, a massive flood destroyed the small community on the banks of Britannia Creek, killing 37 people. The construction of another new Britannia Beach town and the new Mill 3 began shortly thereafter, which still stands today.

By 1929, the Britannia Mines were the largest copper producer in the then British Empire. Throughout the years, copper, gold, silver, lead, zinc and cadmium were extracted.

In 1956, the railway was completed from Squamish to North Vancouver, and two years later the Sea to Sky Highway was completed. In 1963, the Anaconda Mining Company bought the property and mine.

The mine was eventually shut down in 1974 due to the economy and increasing operating costs.

During the seventy-year life of Britannia Mines, 60,000 people from more than 50 nations and cultures, worked and made their homes in the community.

With the support of the mining community and the federal and provincial governments, the Britannia Beach Historical Society opened the Britannia Mine Museum in 1975.

In 1988, Mill 3 was designated as a National Historic Site and is one of the last remaining gravity-fed concentrator mills in North America. The Museum Site is also recognized as an important historic landmark within British Columbia.

In 2005, a restoration project began on the Mill 3 building. The scope of the project was enormous; it included stabilizing the concrete foundations, re-roofing each level, re-glazing the windows, and re-siding the building. A labour of love, each of the 14,416 panes of glass was hand-puttied into the frames to maintain its heritage. The Mill has been the location for a number of movies and TV series including *Scooby Doo Two* and *The X-Files*, as well as several concert performances, most recently with the Men of the Deeps.



In 2010, the Britannia Mine Museum completed the first phase of a major \$14.7-million redevelopment project that transformed a mining legacy site into a vibrant internationally recognized destination. The reinvented Museum celebrates the contribution of mining and minerals to society, the history of the storied Britannia Beach community and the ideas and practices of environmental renewal and sustainability. New sites include the Beaty-Lundin Visitor Centre (theatre, mineral gallery, Canadian Mining Hall of Fame), the Britannia A-Z Exhibition Building, a scenic boardwalk, revamped gold panning area, expanded children's play area and event plaza. More information is available in the *Britannia Mine Museum Fact Sheet*.

Quick Historical Facts

- There are 210 km (150 miles) of mining tunnels in the mountain at Britannia.
- The two communities in the area, Britannia Beach and Mount Sheer, accounted for a population of 60,000 spanning over 70 years. Men and women came from all parts of the world to live and work in the isolated areas.
- Britannia Beach was only accessible by boat from 1904 to 1956 (it took 2 days to travel from Britannia to Vancouver by boat) when they added a rail line to the area. A road was not added until 1958.
- Only employees of the mine and their families could live in the community.
- The Mine was once the largest copper mine in the British Empire. During its operation (1904 – 1974) more than 50 million tons of ore were produced of which included:
 - 650,00 tons of copper
 - 137,000 tons of zinc
 - 17,000 tons of lead
 - 500,000 ounces of gold
 - 6 million ounces of silver
 - 1.55 million lbs of cadmium
- Mining in BC currently employs more than 6,400 and generates more than \$4 billion in annual revenue.

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The Remediation of Britannia

Britannia Mines had an environmental impact on Howe Sound due to acid rock drainage, which occurs naturally when rainwater reacts with oxygen and exposed minerals.

In the 1930's, the issue was known about, though little was understood about the environmental impacts. Environmental standards changed over the years and in 2004, the Province of BC worked with the Britannia Mine Museum and Golder Associates to commission EPCOR to build and operate a water treatment plant.

The EPCOR Britannia Mine Water Treatment Plant uses natural materials to filter minerals and neutralize surface water runoff collected from the area. The water is collected at the plant and is first treated with lime slurry (a mixture of lime and water) in two reactor tanks. The alkaline lime neutralizes the acidic water, quickly raising the pH which causes dissolved metals to naturally come out of solution and precipitate as tiny particles. The water is then fed into a large 'clarifier' tank where a customized, manmade polymer is added. This electro-statically attracts the metal particles, forming clumps that sink through their own weight, creating a dense sludge at the bottom of the tank. This is removed, and the clean water flows into Howe Sound.

Committed to environmental stewardship, the Britannia Mine Museum provides visitors with educational tours of the water treatment plant to learn more about environmental issues.

In the few short years that the remediation campaign has been taking place, Golder Associates have been monitoring the shoreline at Britannia for dissolved metal levels and for its ecology. Marine life has now returned and there have even been recent sightings of whales in the Howe Sound area.

"Mining has come a long way in terms of how they view the environment since the industry began in BC and elsewhere. In the historic sense miners did not intentionally set out to cause negative environmental impacts; today there is a continual process of learning in the industry, being responsive to modern values and standards and ensuring that mining practices are healthy, sustainable and environmentally sound," says Kirstin Clausen, executive director of the Britannia Mine Museum.

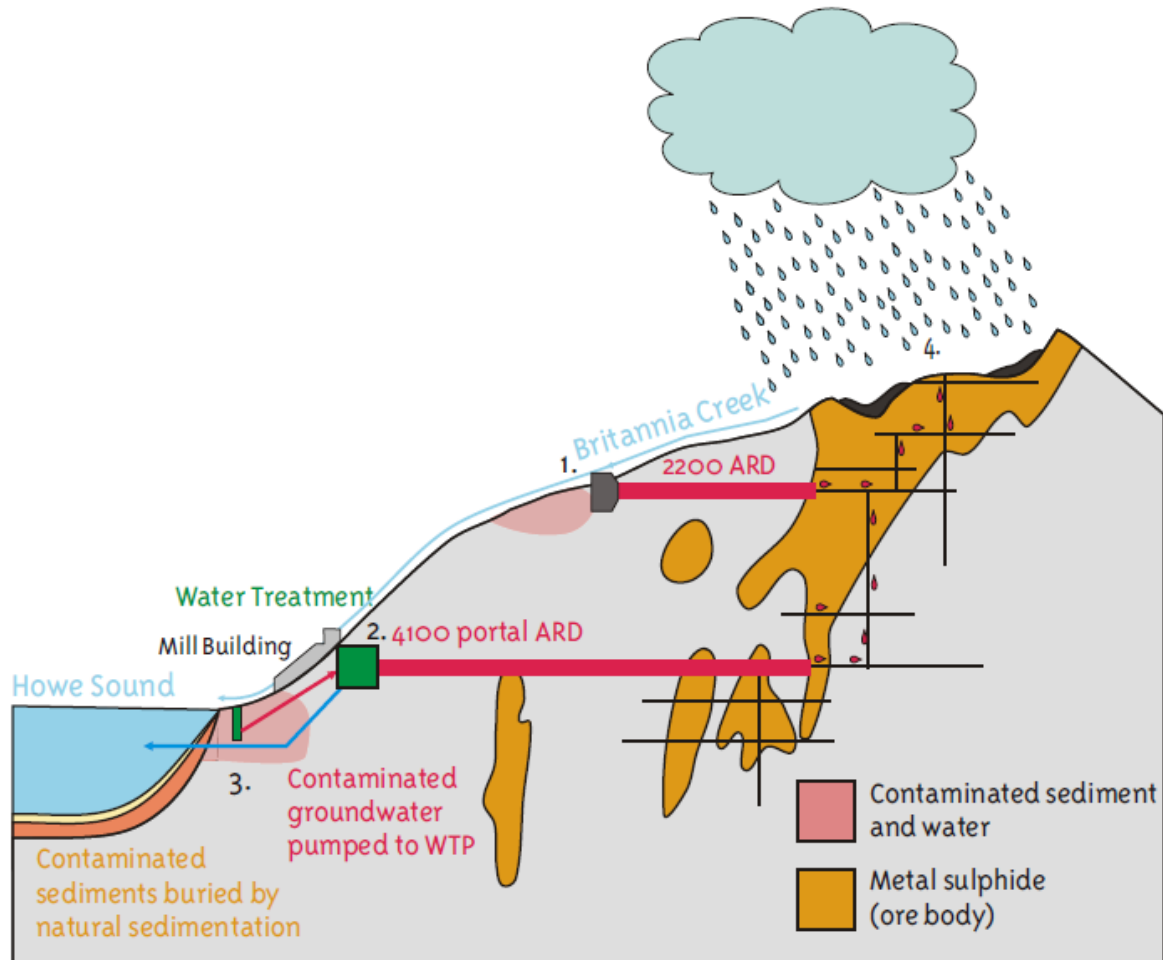
Another area where the Museum proactively makes a responsible environmental choice is in rehabilitating and repurposing existing historic buildings rather than demolishing and building new. There is a continual effort to use local suppliers for materials and supplies so that there is a reduced environmental impact and a strengthening of the local economy.

In 2005, a restoration project began on the Mill 3 building, a National Historic Site. The scope of the project was enormous; it included stabilizing the concrete foundations, re-roofing each level, re-glazing the windows, and re-siding the building while maintaining the original wood frames. A labour of love, each of the 14,416 panes of glass was hand-puttied into the frames to maintain its heritage.

"The rehabilitation of Britannia Beach is an environmental success story and a testament of what can be achieved when public and private groups work together to achieve the same goal," says Clausen. "The Museum's existence, environmental remediation, ongoing restoration wouldn't be possible without the continued support of the mining industry, government and our community partners."

"Britannia is an important part of BC's history and we're committed to ensuring that these stories are shared and remembered for generations to come."

EPCOR Britannia Mine Water Treatment Process



How the pollution has been addressed:

1. Concrete plug prevents ARD leaving 2200 portal
2. ARD collected at 4100 portal and treated by Water Treatment Plant
3. Groundwater collected on foreshore and pumped to Water Treatment Plant
4. Original mining pit slowly being in-filled by rock waste and sludge from treatment process, and water from higher on mountain, being diverted away from pit

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Museum Bios

Kirstin Clausen, Executive Director

With over 25 years experience as a Museum curator, educator and administrator, Kirstin has used her interest in history and the arts to make Museums vibrant and relevant to her local community. She has been at the BC Museum of Mining since 2000 and has guided the Museum through many milestone projects. She measures her success by realizing benefits from a well run organization and by ensuring that the Museum makes a difference in people's lives.

Diane Mitchell, Curator of Education & Collections

With a background in geology, Diane spent 12 years working for the National Museums of Scotland, before moving to BC to take up this position in 2007. Her career has seen a successful marriage of both education and curation, lending itself well to the BC Museum of Mining. At heart, she is an educator who strives to make Museum learning a stimulating, fun and engaging experience.

Henry Gottardi, Site Manager

Henry is trained as an engineer and spent 15 years in industrial design prior to becoming a full time artist/artisan for 20 years. Henry is responsible for overall Museum site management including filming requests and the maintenance and building restoration associated with an historic industrial site.

Carol Watts, Visitor Services & Retail Manager

Joining the Museum in 2004, Carol brought significant experience in the fields of retail and guest services. She is responsible for ensuring visitor safety and amenities. She oversees the Gift Shop, tour company bookings, special event coordination for annual events such as Copper and Fire, and helps to build and maintain relationships with the local tourism industry.

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