

THE ROLE OF MUSEUMS IN TODAY'S TECHNOLOGICAL AGE

Having just read two articles in the Canadian Museums Association Publication I felt that I had to add my comment. I have known both these gentlemen Alan Nursall and Robert Janes for many years and cannot argue with their views on the philosophies that are evident in many of today's Museums and Science Centres. But every time I hear these discussions rightly or wrongly I always wonder why. I think there is still a basic role for each of these two types of institutions. Thirty years ago when I first opened the Telephone Museum it was considered unique because it had both a historical museum collection and an interactive science type of component both in a museum. Times have changed, today in 2016 museums are becoming significantly more like Science Centers and the difference between the two institutions is becoming increasingly blurred. To a degree this is a good thing but sometimes I wonder maybe if it is going too far? I still think there is an important place for museums to be able to remind us of our history. Many of the established museums have exhibits that demonstrate to us how we got to where we are today. When I visited some of the museums in Britain and saw exhibits of the original items like the real actual first Steam Engine, the first Printing Press and the stuffed version of Dolly the actual first cloned Sheep, that made me think I am truly in a real museum. Even in our Telephone Museum where we exhibited examples of the first Wooden Box Telephone and compared them to today's Cell phones many people were amazed that this development has occurred in less than one hundred years.

We can't always have originals in our museums sometimes we have resort to replicas. With some ingenuity we can still develop exhibits that fulfill the role of explaining how many of today's technological marvels have evolved over the years from historical artefacts.

While I don't expect my views will change anything in today's thinking I just hope the places we call museums don't totally forget that preserving our history is still a major role that they can and should fulfill even in today's technological age.

Bert Yeudall
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