

ARCHIVES

news

Vantage Point – the View from Richmond’s First High-Rise Development

The early 1970s saw the construction of Richmond’s first high-rise buildings, the 17-storey Park Towers complex off Minoru Boulevard. The three-tower project was designed by Erickson-Massey Architects under the terms of the municipality’s first land use contract. Prior to this time, the highest building in Richmond was Richmond General Hospital, at a height of 6 storeys.

The first two towers (“C” and “B”) opened for occupancy in 1972 and were designed as rental accommodation. The final tower (“A”) opened two years later as condominium housing. The Towers were advertised as a place for “luxurious living ...in the heart of Richmond.”

Shortly after construction of the final tower, Engineering Department staff took photographs from the building of its surroundings, including Richmond Square (now Richmond Centre Mall) to the east and Minoru Park to the west. These slides were recently described and scanned as part of the City of Richmond Archives’ ongoing digitization program.

The images provide a view of Richmond’s Town Centre in transition at the beginning of its rapid development through the 1970s and 1980s.



Advertisement in Richmond Review newspaper, November 10, 1972.

City of Richmond Archives Richmond Review newspaper collection



Richmond Square and beyond looking northeast (note shadows of the towers).
City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1988 123 656



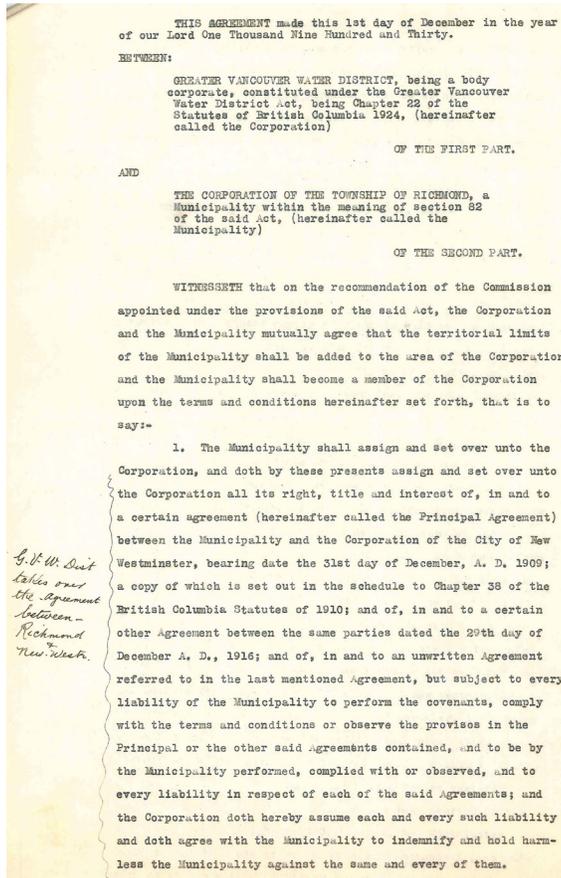
Richmond Square, Municipal Hall and beyond looking southeast.
City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1988 123 654



Richmond Square and beyond looking east.
City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1988 123 652



Minoru Park (with Minoru Chapel) and beyond looking northwest.
City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1988 123 660



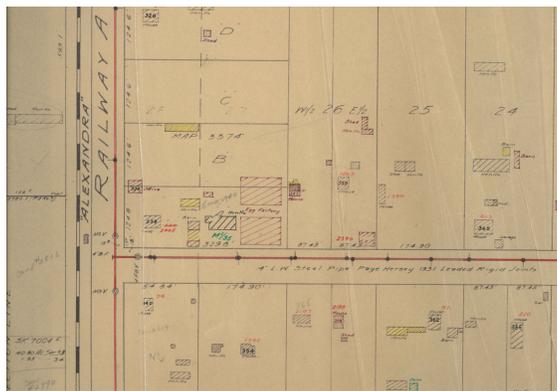
First page of 1930 agreement whereby Richmond joins the Greater Vancouver Water District
 City of Richmond Archives MR SE 66, File 548

Focus on the Record – Early Records of Richmond’s Waterworks System

The importance of a municipal waterworks system to the daily lives of residents is often overlooked. In Richmond, it wasn’t until 1910 that a system for piping drinking water was established. Prior to this date, drinking water was normally available only through the use of rain barrels or by delivery, often in milk cans, by water wagon or train.

The development of Richmond’s waterworks system is well documented in records held at the City of Richmond Archives. City bylaws, Council minutes and reports, and files relating to the building, regulation and taxation of the water system provide an accurate picture of its installation, maintenance, expansion and continual modernization. These records speak to the importance of the 1909 bylaw authorizing an agreement with the City of New Westminster to supply piped water to Richmond and the 1930 agreement to join the Greater Vancouver Water District and the implications of that to the present day.

In addition to City government records, the private papers at the City of Richmond Archives of Charles Jones, the waterworks superintendent for the municipality from 1913 to 1952, enable researchers to understand the complexity of the work performed and the challenges facing a municipality situated on islands at the mouth of the Fraser River. The manner in which Jones laid the watermain on the river bed to supply water from Lulu Island to Sea Island in 1937 was celebrated as a technical feat never before seen in the province.



Waterworks atlas map for area near Alexandra Station, 1936.
 City of Richmond Archives Map 1991 40 75

City records such as the 1936 Waterworks Atlas, which mapped all built structures in the municipality and their proximity to connections to watermains, are consulted on a regular basis today by environmental and property researchers studying land use in Richmond. In total, the early records of waterworks tell the story of the growth of the municipality through the building of an infrastructure which many people now take for granted.

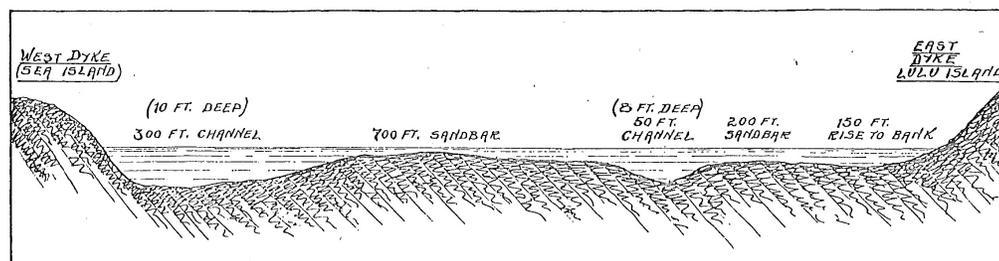
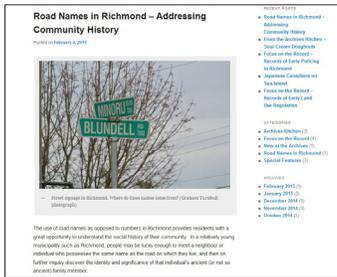


Diagram of the laying of the watermain to Sea Island, 1937
 City of Richmond Archives Accession 2011 25



Charles Jones, Waterworks Superintendent.
 City of Richmond Archives Photograph 1986 19 1

The Archives and its Social Media Following



Sample posting on the new Archives' blog.

was launched at the end of October and in its initial two months had over 1,000 views. New blog content is published two or three times a month.

This expanding social media presence has been made possible through the financial support and dedicated volunteer work of the Friends of the Richmond Archives. This work has enabled the Friends to promote the importance of the City of Richmond Archives in a vibrant and interactive manner to a new demographic in the community.

John Campbell – Volunteer of the Year



Archivist Bill Purver presenting Volunteer of the Year Award to John Campbell.
Graham Turnbull photograph

The City of Richmond Archives Volunteer of the Year for 2014 is John Campbell.

As Social Media Coordinator for the Friends of the Richmond Archives, John has put the Archives on the social media map, with his coordination, research and writing of the Friends' Facebook page, and maintenance and updating of the Archives' YouTube and History Pin channels. John was also instrumental in the launch late in the year of the Archives' blog "Outside the Box."

Congratulations, John, and thank you for your tremendous support of the Archives and your great success in promoting its importance in the online universe!

New Research Guide – Records relating to Duck Island

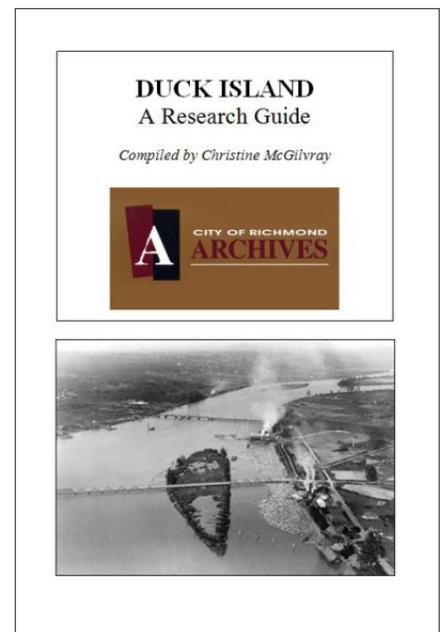
One of the biggest mixed-use developments in Richmond's history is now in the planning stage. It includes a hotel and conference centre, as well as retail and entertainment amenities.

The development is to be located in the City Centre area on what was formerly an island anchoring the old bridge to Sea Island. This site, which has physically merged with Lulu Island through infill, is still known as Duck Island.

In anticipation of increased research on this site, the Archives has published a research guide, compiled by Archives' volunteer Christine McGilvray. The guide assists researchers by listing and describing those textual, cartographic and photographic records held by the Archives which explain the history of land use at the location.

List of Donors of Community Records in 2014

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- Richmond Retired Teachers Association
- Eunice Robinson
- Royal Canadian Legion Branch 291
- Dennis Scott
- Sea Island Heritage Society
- Jeanne Tanaka
- Graham Turnbull
- Geraldine Wray





Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Richmond Archives will be held Thursday, March 19 at 7:00 pm in the Archives Reference Room. This is the yearly business meeting at which the Friends elect a new Executive, report on financial matters, and set a budget for the coming year.

The Friends would also like to remind members that the membership year runs from October 1 to September 30. Those members who are in arrears are encouraged to send their annual dues (\$5 per person) to the Friends of the Richmond Archives, c/o City of Richmond Archives, 7700 Minoru Gate, Richmond, B.C. V6Y 1R9 . Phone 604-247-8305 or email archives@richmond.ca if you are unsure about your membership status.

Donating to the Friends

The Friends of the Richmond Archives is a registered charity and welcomes donations to assist with its activities to support the City of Richmond Archives. A receipt for income tax purposes will be issued for donations over \$10.

In 2014, your donations helped support the Ted Clark Interurban Photograph project, the Community Records Processing project, the Community Exhibit program, the annual Archives Tea, and the establishment of our new blog, "Outside the Box: The Richmond Archives Blog."



CITY OF RICHMOND ARCHIVES

7700 Minoru Gate
Richmond, B.C. V6Y 1R9
Archivist: Bill Purver
Phone: 604-247-8305
Email: archives@richmond.ca
www.richmond.ca/archives
Public Reference Room Hours
Monday–Thursday, 9:00–4:30
Appointment recommended

A Shared Remembrance

On the night of December 5, 1944, nearly 500 bombers were in flight on a World War II bombing mission destined for northern Germany. Two of the aircraft, a Halifax and a Lancaster, collided over the village of Yelvertoft, England, causing the deaths of all 14 crewmen on board, twelve Canadians and two British. In a tragic coincidence the Rear Gunner on the Halifax was Pilot Officer Air Gunner Ian Myron and the Rear Gunner on the Lancaster was Flying Officer Air Gunner Ellwyn Cooper, both former students of Richmond High School.

The City of Richmond Archives was approached early last year to assist the Yelvertoft History Group in documenting the lives of the fallen Richmond airmen, as a part of a special tribute to be held on the 70th anniversary of the tragedy.

On November 11, the Friends of the Richmond Archives devoted its annual exhibit at the Remembrance Day reception at City Hall to the memory of Ian Myron and Ellwyn Cooper.

On December 6, the Village of Yelvertoft commemorated the 70th anniversary of the tragedy with a ceremony at its local War Memorial and with the planting of two trees, a maple and an oak, in honour of the Canadian and British servicemen who lost their lives.

In attendance in Yelvertoft was Friends’ member and Archives’ volunteer Lynne Farquharson. Lynne distributed Canadian flags and City of Richmond pins to school children and dignitaries, presented a letter of appreciation to the Chair of the Yelvertoft Parish Council from Richmond Mayor Malcolm Brodie, and planted the maple tree on behalf of all Canadians.

The shared remembrance was a fitting tribute to the 14 Canadian and British airmen who lost their lives over Yelvertoft and to two of Richmond’s own war heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice for King and country.



Ian Myron (L) and Ellwyn Cooper (R).
City of Richmond Archives photographs (composite)



Friends’ display at Remembrance Day reception at City Hall.
Lynne Farquharson photograph



Left: Parish Council Chair Geoff Holmes reads letter from Mayor Brodie at Yelvertoft memorial.
Lynne Farquharson photograph



Right: Lynne Farquharson plants a maple tree in Yelvertoft in honour of fallen Canadian airmen.
Jane Larder photograph