ArchivesNews

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The Friends of the Richmond Archives Celebrate 40 Years!

The City of Richmond Archives stands out as exceptionally fortunate within Canada's archival community. Few community or municipal archives benefit from a Friends group as active, dedicated, and supportive as ours!

Christine McGilvray, FOTRA President:

Who doesn't love an anniversary celebration? A forty-year (Ruby!) event is on our horizon for November this year and – as with most anniversaries – the Friends of the Richmond Archives (FOTRA) Board views it as a marker for collective memories and events to be aired, shared and celebrated.

The special occasion being celebrated is the very first meeting of twenty-two individuals who were founding members of the Friends, which took place on November 19, 1986. The 40th Anniversary Tea - coincidentally also to be held on ***Thursday, November 19, 2026*** *– will pay special attention to the role of our membership and its achievements as a supporting pillar of our community archives.*

Archives volunteer, founding member and current member Terry Eastwood, Professor Emeritus of UBC, who will be our keynote speaker this year, is undertaking a research project to compile a History of the Friends of the Richmond Archives. Based on his initial research, we have enjoyed the opportunity over the past couple of months of viewing a variety of documents which brought about the initial gathering of twenty-two and turned it into the organization of a hundred and forty Friends we have today. We have invited some of those early movers and shakers to join us as special guests so we can recognize their significant contributions.

We look forward to sharing forty years of the successes which were achieved by the combination of supportive and creative archivists, volunteers, and Friends who recognize the importance of gathering and preserving our community's collective identity. I think we will all be astonished at what has been done.

The anniversary event will also be recorded by way of a group photograph of all present, to update the one taken at the 20th Anniversary Tea. Please mark the date on your calendar. We hope you will join us.

Elizabeth Denham, Richmond's First Archivist:

Forty Years of Friends

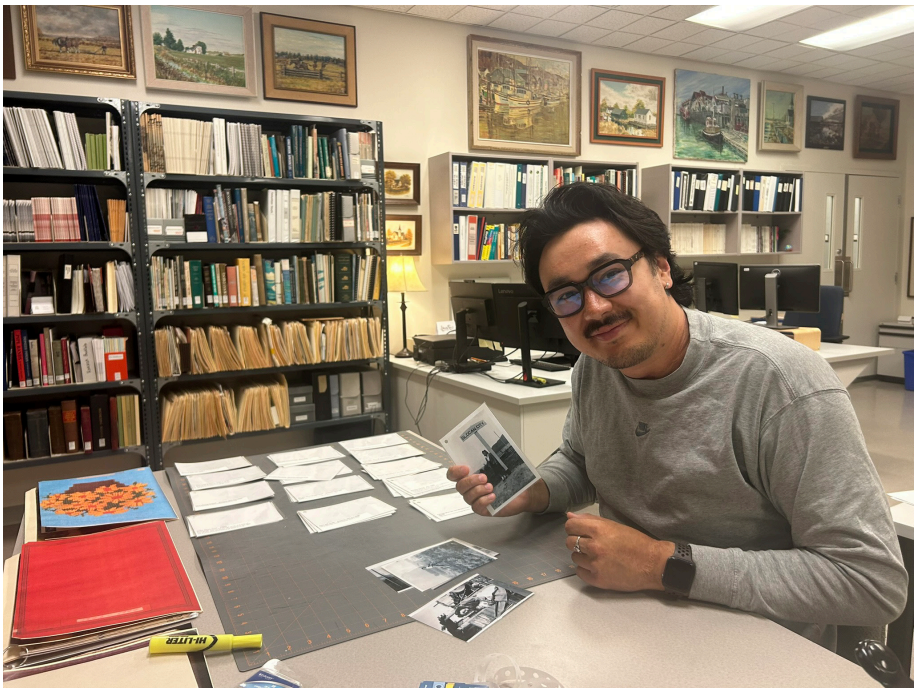
More than forty years ago, I began my career as Richmond's first Archivist, working in a cramped vault at the back of the museum. Richmond is where I was born and raised, so the work mattered to me personally. A few families and community organisations had donated their records. My job was to arrange and describe them and encourage others to do the same. In 1986, a small group of us founded the Friends of the Richmond Archives because we believed an archives does best when its community stands behind it.

Last week I went back. The current Archivist, Dovelle Buie, invited me to visit, and I spent time with the Archives staff and with Christine McGilvray, President of the Friends. We chose that day because my former professor, Terry Eastwood, would be there volunteering. Terry developed and directed the Master of Archival Studies program at UBC, the first of its kind in North America. I was honoured to be accepted into the first class, from 1981 to 1983. The program has since graduated hundreds of professional archivists who have gone on to lead work in

(Continued on page 2...)

Donna Kynaston, Elizabeth Denham, Christine McGilvray and Terry Eastwood holding a poster-sized version of the November 19, 1986 sign-in sheet from the Friends's first meeting. Donna, Liz and Terry attended the first meeting of the Friends. Elizabeth was Richmond's first Archivist from 1983 to 1989 and Donna was a contract Archivist from 1986-1989. Photograph taken on September 17, 2026.

Bringing the Box to You



Shintaro Tsukamoto in the Archives Workspace, June 2026.

Following successful completion of a school-based extended practicum, all teacher candidates in the Bachelor of Education program at the University of British Columbia participate in a three-week community field experience program.

In June, the Archives welcomed Shintaro Tsukamoto to work on a new educational kit which will be loaned out to Richmond Schools.

The educational kit Shintaro designed is entitled *"Standing for Values: Japanese Canadian Internment and Redress. A Family's Perspective-the Harada Family Photographs."* The big idea for the kit is: "Exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world." This idea relates to the British Columbia Curriculum for English Language Arts grades 6, 7, and 8. The kit includes three detailed lesson plans, a slide show, and replica archival records.

With gratitude, Shintaro received guidance from Friends of the Richmond Archives members Christine Marin, Jeanne Ryan and Kelvin Higo.

Retired teacher and member of the Friends, Christine Marin, discusses the development of lesson plans with Shintaro, June 2026.

Shintaro and Jeanne Ryan met for coffee in Steveston to learn more about Jeanne's family's history and the Harada family photograph albums she donated to the City of Richmond Archives, June 2026.

Reflections from Elizabeth

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public and community archives, access and privacy, records and information management and digital preservation. It was wonderful to see him again and celebrate his inspiring leadership and mentorship over more than 50 years.

What I found was remarkable. The Archives has grown in every way: its facility, staff, volunteers and collections. It is also where the City's historical public records are kept and preserved. It is an invaluable cultural and historical resource, and a model of what community archives outreach should be.

I was moved and inspired by everyone who came after me and built this into such an outstanding program. That includes the Friends, who have raised money for special projects and championed the Archives for four decades.

To every member, past and present: thank you. To all of Richmond's archivists, staff and volunteers, thank you. It was quite a trip down memory lane. Here's to the next forty years.

Elizabeth Denham was Richmond's Municipal Archivist from 1983 to 1989. Currently, she is the Chair of the Jersey Data Protection Authority and International Advisor, Data and Cyber for law firm Baker McKenzie. Denham was previously the UK Information Commissioner from 2016 until 2021 and held the title of Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia, having been appointed the role in May 2010. Prior to this she was the Assistant Privacy Commissioner of Canada. Elizabeth was also City of Calgary Archivist from 1989 to 1994.

Donna Kynaston, Elizabeth Denham and Terry Eastwood review the Archives office files from the early 1980s, September 17, 2026.

Who Uses the Archives?

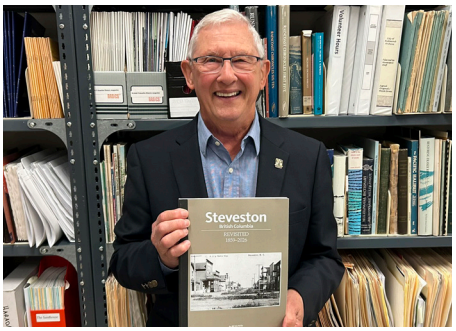
Students

Harvard University student, Yichen Li, July 2026.

"I came to the Richmond Archives to pursue research for my senior thesis at Harvard, where I study History & East Asian Studies. As a first-generation Chinese Canadian immigrant who grew up on Vancouver Island, I wanted to write a transpacific history connecting Chinese immigrant workers and contractors in the B.C. canneries to their environment and experiences in Southern China. The Richmond Archives provided amazing local documents and photos on Chinese communities and the canneries, broadening my insights into my research area. These sources are not only very helpful for researchers wanting to tell a grounded historical narrative, but also the general public to learn important pieces of Richmond and B.C. history!"

Yichen Li

Authors and Historians



Bill McNulty with new book *"Steveston Revisited: 1859-2026,"* September 2026.

Outgoing City Councillor Bill McNulty has written a new book on Steveston. The new publication offers readers a comprehensive and richly illustrated look at the neighbourhood's transformation from a 19th-century settlement into the vibrant waterfront community it is today.

"The City of Richmond Archives was essential in helping this book come alive," said Dammy Ogunseitan, Director of Communications and Marketing for the City of Richmond. *"It's wonderful to see our city's historical collections used to tell such a meaningful story about Steveston, and I'm happy to see the Archives play a part in preserving and sharing this history with the community."*

Donors

Members of the Lam family visited us in May. Keep your eye out for a new blog post researched and written by FOTRA Board member Clarence Sihoe entitled: *"Richmond's Early Chinese Canadian Settlers, No.2: LAM Tuck Yew, LEUNG Yuet Wah and The Hong Wo & Company Store – A Family Connection." LAM Tuck Yew* was LAM Ching Ling's brother; together, they operated the Hong Wo Store in Steveston. With thanks, Maisie donated a number of documents and photographs to the Archives this year.

The Lam Family visits the Archives. Alessandra Bennett, Maisie Lam, and Carolyn Myles, May 2026.

Volunteer News

A big thank you is extended to all our volunteers for their countless contributions! Here are a few recent examples.

Lanie Man is currently digitizing the *Richmond Review* from microfilm. Lanie has completed the issues from 1966 through 1973.

Lucy Bosma describes each issue of the *Richmond Review* after Lanie digitizes them. Lucy is a SFU student majoring in History and French.

Anna Lee, UBC Master of Archival Studies student, created a World Ocean Day display featuring the Harada family records. She was also the production/presentation editor for Lance Carey's article on the history of field hockey in Richmond.

Byron Buie supported the Archives by using his 3D printer to create replacements for damaged and broken microfilm reels. Byron also created a collection of model airplanes, which were distributed to children and visitors during the Sea Island Heritage Society's May open house.

Friends of the RICHMOND ARCHIVES

Remembering John May

It is with heavy hearts that we share the news that John May passed away July 12, 2026. John was a true son of Richmond, a proud farmer and, to paraphrase Thomas Kidd, "a good sturdy man of the best type." Raised on the family farm in East Richmond, he and his wife Doreen continued the family business, raising cattle and chickens and growing strawberries and cranberries. John had an immense knowledge of local history which he happily shared during his frequent visits to the City of Richmond Archives or when called upon by inquiring archivists. He was a long-time member of the Friends of the Richmond Archives and will be sincerely missed. Our deepest condolences go out to John's family and friends.

2025 Donations

In 2025, the Friends gratefully received $1,978.80 in donations. Your generous donations help to support: the Social Media program; the Digitization Program; the Community Exhibit Program; the annual Archives Tea; and more.

The Friends of the Richmond Archives is a registered charity and welcomes donations to assist with its activities to support the Richmond Archives. A receipt for income purposes will be issued for donations over $10.00. E-transfers, with full name and contact information, are accepted at: fotra@richmondarchives.ca.

CITY OF RICHMOND

Archives

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Email: archives@richmond.ca

richmond.ca/archives

Public Reference Room Hours:
Monday–Thursday: 9:00am–4:30pm
Appointment recommended

2026-27 FOTRA Board.

President, Christine McGilvray, sits at the head of the table. Clockwise, other members of the Board include: Jackie Brown, John Campbell, Clarence Sihoe, Lance Carey, Charan Gill, Jon Henderson and Lanie Man.

FOTRA display at the Royal Canadian Legion Branch 291 Richmond Veterans Street Banner Celebration Event, September 26, 2026.

Debbie Jiang (left) and Jackie Brown (right).

Christine McGilvray photograph.

FOTRA World Ocean Day display at the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. Coinciding with Doors Open, FOTRA was invited to participate. With help from volunteer Anna Lee, the display, featuring the Harada family photograph albums, was very popular, June 6, 2026.

Jackie Brown (left) and Christine McGilvray (right).

Staffing News

Fin Bartels, Records Analyst, September 2026.

The Archives is pleased to welcome Fin Bartels to the team. Fin will be working at the Archives while Karen Ng is working as a Freedom of Information (FOI) Specialist until November 2027.

They have a dual Masters of Archival and Library & Information Studies from UBC and worked as a Project Archivist at Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre.

Welcome, Fin!

Photograph Credits

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