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# ARCHIVES

news



## O Zone History Lounge and Store at the Richmond Archives

As part of the O Zone, Richmond's celebration site for the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, the City of Richmond Archives was transformed into the "History Lounge and Store", providing visitors from far and wide with a taste of the proud history of the municipality. Digital exhibits of historical images and screenings of newly-digitized moving images from the Archives' holdings allowed over 2700 visitors a brief but fascinating glimpse into Richmond's past.



An enthusiastic and knowledgeable crew of volunteers from the Friends of the Richmond Archives helped welcome visitors. Archives publications and postcards were offered for sale, and many recollections were shared by local residents and with people from around the world.

The "Lounge" also provided digital exhibit space for images documenting the public experience of the O Zone, thanks to the tremendous work of 22 volunteer photographers from the Richmond Photo Club. Images of the O Zone were created and displayed on a daily basis, and now form part of the permanent record of Richmond's Olympic experience at the Archives. A sample of some of these images can be found on page 4 of this Newsletter.

### In This Issue

The Archives participation at the O Zone, Richmond's celebration site for the Winter Olympics, is highlighted.

The Newsletter also pays tribute to the late Mary Keen and to the lasting contributions she made to the Archives and to the community of Richmond as a whole.



## Mary Keen, 1942-2009

Mary Keen passed away in Richmond on December 5, 2009, after a long, dignified and courageous battle with ovarian cancer.

Mary played a leading role in the development of community support for the City of Richmond Archives over the last two decades. She served as President of the Friends of the Richmond Archives from 1996 to 2008 and during that time was responsible for initiating the annual Archives Tea, establishing an annual UBC award for students excelling in the study of archives at a community level, and promoting the use of archives in understanding Richmond's rich history.

Mary was the author of 5 books on Richmond's past published by the City of Richmond Archives historical publication program.

Her first major publication, "We Will Remember Them, the Lives Behind the Richmond Cenotaph," is a poignant testament to the youthful lives cut short by both world wars. Her research resulted in the decision to refurbish the Cenotaph and to return it to its original location in front of City Hall.

Before her death, she completed a draft of her sixth book, which is expected to be published in the fall of 2010.

Mary's dedication, humour, goodwill and unequivocal support for the role of the archives in the community are greatly missed by staff and volunteers at the Archives.

Bill Purver  
Archivist, City of Richmond

## A Tribute to Mary Keen

by Lynne Waller

It was a daunting task to be asked by the Keen family to be one of those to speak at Mary's "Celebration of Life" December 11th following Mary's death from ovarian cancer earlier in the month. She and I had become great friends while she was the president of the Friends of the Richmond Archives and I was the City of Richmond Archivist.

Some of the following remarks are taken from that eulogy and some are ideas about Mary that have come along in the quiet days of January 2010.

I first met Mary when I was a graduate archival student in the mid-1990s. I was encouraged to get some experience by joining the Friends of the Richmond Archives. It was during that time that Mary became president and with support and encouragement from the Friends began a program of revitalization for this group.

Mary was president of the Friends of the Richmond Archives for 12 years. She researched and wrote two pamphlets of local history before writing "We Will Remember Them," a book about the lives of the young men of Richmond lost in two world wars. This book brought many honours and awards. The one I think she was most proud of was representing "Silver Star Mothers" in 1998 and laying the wreath at the Cenotaph on Remembrance Day.



Mary laying wreath at the Cenotaph in 1998.

She often said, "You can reach out and touch the history of Richmond." And she did that through her research and interviews with pioneer families. Mary completed two of these books, on Sea Island and South Arm, and was nearly through the third on East Richmond when her illness intervened. Her legacy will be these books, her book on the Cenotaph, and other research projects.

She worked on a document of Publications Standards that emphasized the use of the resources within the City of Richmond Archives. As a young librarian in England she had worked with archival documents in various public facilities so she was familiar with the practices and processes in archives. She received further knowledge during a volunteer job at Fort Steele. All of this background brought her to appreciate the value and uses of archival documents.



Mary and Mayor Brodie at the Archives Tea, 2008.

Together we came up with the idea of creating a "neighbourhood" series, as part of the Friends book publishing program. Mary wanted to produce social histories that linked the events in Richmond with those of the outside world. Having come from England where stories of the past went back many centuries, she was fascinated with the brief history of European settlement here.

## A Tribute to Mary Keen

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She had high standards about volunteering and treated her time in the City of Richmond Archives seriously. I used to marvel at how reliable she was coming to the Archives each Wednesday morning -- for fifteen years -- to do her research. Her strength was even apparent when she continued her work during her treatments in the past three years.



**Mary doing research at the Archives, 1994.**



**Mary promoting an early publication.**

The Friends were so successful under her leadership that she was called on to deliver talks on how to build a volunteer archival support organization at the Archives graduate school at the University of British Columbia, for the Archives Association of British Columbia, and for the City of Vancouver Archives. She was always willing to donate time to let the community know of the functions and worth of the Archives by attending meetings of service clubs, school assemblies, and many other community functions.

The Archives Tea, an annual event fostered by Mary, has become an institution in Richmond. It is not a surprise that during her term as president the membership of the Friends grew from less than 20 to more than 250. She had charisma, authority, and warmth which made every meeting, research session, and event an occasion worth attending.

We had many UBC graduate students come through the Archives for internships or course credit. She made strong connections with many of them and was always impressed by their work ethic in going forward with an education. It was Mary's idea to have the Friends endow an annual award at the University of British Columbia for a graduate archival student with a special interest in community archives. The Friends of the Richmond Archives are now arranging for this award to be renamed in her honour.

Mary devoted her considerable intelligence and work ethic to our community from 1994 until her strength waned last summer. Personally I am grateful to have encountered her in my life when I did, and think she has served all of us here in the Archives so well as a mentor, co-worker, and friend.



**Mary and Lynne at the Archives Tea, 2008.**





## O Zone Photo Documentation Project

As part of its role in preserving the documentary evidence of Richmond's participation in the 2010 Olympic Winter Games, the City of Richmond Archives approached the Richmond Photo Club to provide the expertise of its members in capturing a photographic record of the O Zone, Richmond's Olympic celebration site. 22 volunteer photographers submitted approximately 2,000 images of the O Zone documenting all 17 days of activities, as well as the Olympic Torch Relay through Richmond. These images are now part of the permanent holdings of the Archives. A small sample is presented below. A new online exhibit incorporating many more of the images is being planned for the Archives web site.

### Annual General Meeting Friends of the Archives

The Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the Richmond Archives will be held Wednesday, April 21 at 7:00 pm at the Archives Reference Room. This is the yearly business meeting at which the Friends elect a new Executive and Committee Chairs, 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 fee (a very low \$5 per person) to the Friends of the Richmond Archives, c/o City of Richmond Archives, 7700 Minoru Gate, Richmond, B.C. V6Y 1R9. Telephone to 604-247-8305 if you are unsure about your membership status.

The Friends also welcome donations. The society is a registered charity and can issue tax receipts for amounts over \$10.00.



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Public Reference Room Hours  
Monday - Thursday 9:00-4:30  
Appointment recommended

