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# ARCHIVES

news



*Ernest Chan, in the back row, (where the arrow points to "me") stands with fellow members of the Royal Canadian Airforce Reserve Fighter Squadron 442, for a group picture at Sea Island, 1951.*

## 442 Squadron, Sea Island's Part-time Pilots

In 1951 Canada went through a year of "protective re-armament" in response to the Cold War of the post Second World War era. Part of the strategy was the expansion of RCAF Reserve Forces across the country in selected bases such as Sea Island.

The unit was comprised of men from around the Lower Mainland who came from a variety of jobs: salesmen, clerks, dentists, "and others who gave up a few hours each weekend to break in on Vampire Jet fighters" according to a story by Bill Ryan in a Vancouver Sun magazine supplement.

Luckily, one of these men, Ernest Chan, took pictures providing a look back at Sea Island and a military effort of 50 years ago. More photos on back page.

### In This Issue...

- Chan Photos of 442 Squadron
- New City Records Storage receives an upgrade
- Horse Racing Book contains new archival donations
- A New History of Sea Island in process.



*Hugh McRoberts, the first to see the potential for settlement on Sea Island, photographed circa 1965.*



*Aerial view of Sea Island and part of the Middle Arm of the Fraser River, circa 1940.*

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### Open House and Awards Nov. 22 for Archives Week

Despite the cessation of Provincial funding for Archives Week, the City of Richmond Archives will go ahead with a planned Open House and Archives Awards presentation Thursday, November 22, 2001, 1:00-4:00.

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### Books On Sale at the City of Richmond Archives

"Whispers From The Shedrows: A history of Thoroughbred Racing in Richmond," by Gerry Gilker, Jack Lowe and Dody Wray, 2001 - \$20.00

"We Will Remember Them: The lives behind the Richmond Cenotaph," by Mary Keen, 1998 - \$13.86.

"Richmond and its Bridges: Fifteen Crossings of the Fraser River," by Alan Dawe, 1996 - \$16.00.

"Richmond, Child of the Fraser, (1979)" and the 1989 Supplement, by Leslie Ross - set for \$26.75.

"History of Richmond Municipality," by Thomas Kidd, 1927 - \$5.35.

"Meeting Places: Richmond's Town Halls, 1879-1995," by Mary Keen, 1995 - \$2.50.

"No Idle Hands. From the Parlour to the Rec Room: Leisure Choices in Richmond, 1875-1955," by Mary Keen, 1996 - \$2.50.

All taxes included. Proceeds support archival programs at City of Richmond Archives.

## New Book on Sea Island Underway

The City of Richmond Archives continues its book publishing program with a new work on the history of Sea Island by Mary Keen. The book, as yet untitled, will be completed by spring 2002. Mary is the author of "We Will Remember Them: The lives behind the Richmond Cenotaph."

The book is the beginning of a long term research project to explore the social history of Richmond's neighbourhoods. Following is an excerpt:

*Sea Island was a sparsely vegetated, sea washed island when John Trutch was commissioned to survey the area known as the New Westminster District. ... Hugh McRoberts knew that if he built a dyke around his land on Sea Island he could claim the fertile delta soil and protect it from the ravages of water. He was the first settler to see the potential of the land for agricultural purposes, which soon became the reason for settlement of the area.*

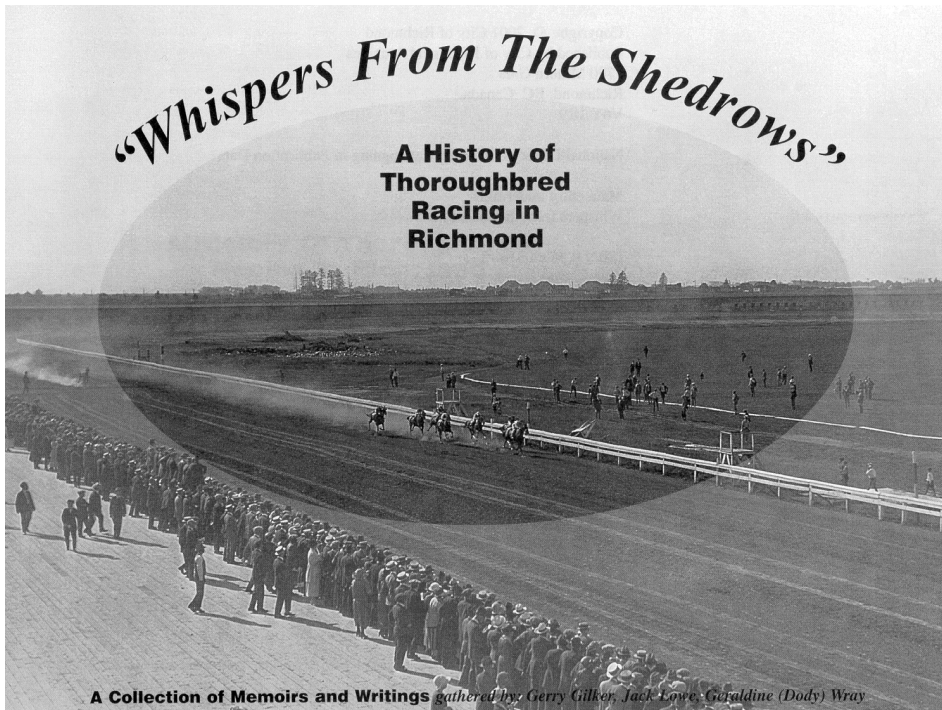
The Richmond Archives will be the publisher of the new volume with funding provided by the Friends of the Richmond Archives. This continues the community partnership that has resulted in the production of books and pamphlets of community history listed at the left.

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### Who Uses the Archives?



Don Gordon, a long-time volunteer with the Friends of the Richmond Archives, is shown being interviewed by UBC students Lisa Toffolo, 3rd year, and Sara Sleeman, 4th year, both history majors. Lisa and Sara were working on assignments related to changing land use patterns on Sea Island. Part of their task was to use primary sources. This included a chat with Don and a look at original documents in the Archives.



*The cover of the Archives new book on the history of thoroughbred racing in Richmond used a photograph from the collection of Marjorie Knight. The picture was taken in 1923 of the Home Stretch at Brighouse Track with the long series of shedrows in the distance.*

## Family Photos Enhance Book on Racing

While interviewing people for a book on the history of horse racing in Richmond, authors Jack Lowe, Dody Wray and Gerry Gilker met Marjorie Knight, a descendent of the Wilkinson-Brighouse, and Churchill families, all early settlers in Richmond. Not only did Mrs. Knight have stories to relate, she was also able to bring to the project more than 30 priceless photos of the early days of racing at Minoru Park, later named Brighouse Park. Three of these were used in the book: “Whispers From The Shedrows: A history of thoroughbred racing in Richmond.” Mrs. Knight was one of more than 30 people interviewed for the new book, many of whom donated documents and photos of early racing scenes to the City of Richmond Archives.



*Michael Wilkinson-Brighouse and his family, circa 1910, perhaps on their way to the races at the new track on Lulu Island. From left: son Jack, Mr. Brighouse, his mother-in-law Mrs. Holt, wife Jeannie and Daughter Jeannie.*



*Dovelle Buie, City Records Analyst, looks in one of nearly 3,500 filing boxes at the City's Records Centre.*

## Records Centre refurbished with Compact Shelving

**With approximately 1,600 employees and 121 years of operations, the City of Richmond has more than a few documents to keep track of! The need for accountability along with provincial and municipal legislation mean that more city records than ever must be kept. To increase capacity and improve employee safety, the City recently upgraded the records storage area with compact shelving that moves easily on tracks.**

**And what does this have to do with the Archives? When these files reach a certain age and value, some are transferred to the Archives where they become part of the documentary heritage of the community.**



*This is filing on a grand scale!*



*Ernest Chan, circa 1951, about to embark on a trip on behalf of the Reserve Air Force. Mr. Chan is now a member of the Friends of the Richmond Archives. He sometimes helps Archives staff with translations of documents containing Chinese characters.*



*Ernest Chan took this photograph during a training mission in the skies over Richmond in the early 1950's. The oval in the left of the picture is Lansdowne Track. The road running north and south at the middle is Garden City. The North Shore Mountains are barely visible through the mist and cloud to the north.*

## Next Issue

**The next issue of the Archives Newsletter is due Spring 2002.**

**Watch for a report from students in the Master of Archival Studies program at UBC about class trips and projects at the Richmond Archives.**

**New photograph accessions will be highlighted.**

**We will also be taking a look at children's programs in the Archives.**

(Continued from front page) Last spring Ernest Chan made his photograph album from the early 1950's available to the City of Richmond Archives on a "copy loan." We took the prints to a specialty lab in Vancouver to obtain copy prints and negatives which now form part of our community's historic photograph collection. The views are tremendous, as shown in the aerial photograph above. It was also a good chance to review Canada's military outlook of 50 years ago.



*Ernie Chan, Gord Felski and Irving Beck overhaul a Harvard motor during weekend training.*



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Public Reference Room Hours  
Monday - Thursday  
9:30-11:30 and 1:00-4:00