

SPORT....SWIMMING

Mrs. Dennis (Betty) Hedges, 336 Granville August 21, 1973

1947...came here from England

1960...Centennial Pool opened in Richmond, the first pool.

Recreation department together with lifeguards started a summer program. Four sections to Richmond: Bridgeport, Brighthouse, Sea Island, West End.

West-Lu Ratepayers approached Mrs. Hedges to coach West-Lu group in competitive swimming because of her English competitive swim record.

Young Ralph Widdess, who lived nearby and was in competitive swimming at the YMCA, Vancouver, helped her coach the West-Lu group.

Four lifeguards at Centennial Pool wanted competitive swimming and Centennial Society put up trophies. At the end of the season, because of training, it was thought a shame to let it go to waste. One of the guards, Dean Aspinall, was also coach of Jericho Hill Deaf and Blind School, had swum for Canada in 1954 British Empire Games helped.

1960-61: With Mrs. Hedges 100 children were taken to Percy Norman Pool, Vancouver for indoor swimming...called Richmond Jericho Hill Swim Club because it combined with the deaf children from Jericho Hill School...this continued for about 5 years...the group entered various competitions but did not progress but pool time so costly...only could afford 1 or 2 hours a week...Percy Norman Pool cost \$25.00 an hour rental...higher now.

1965 or 1966:...changed over from winter swimming (at Percy Norman Pool) to join the British Columbia Summer Swim Ass'n.

1967: Lower Mainland Regional Swim Meet held at Centennial Pool. Young swimmers go on to championship events at British Columbia Summer Swim Association meet, Empire Pool, UBC at end of August.

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Training for Regionals (7 regions in province) is May to mid-August...first, second and third in individual events... first and second relay teams from regionals meet for championships.

Coaches:

Dean Aspinall first coach, here 5 years...Mrs. Hedges was assistant coach 5-6 years. Other coaches: Dorothy Glass, Pat White, Bob Thomas, David Payne, Don Burns, Bill Nash and Kevin Kavanaugh.

3 Richmond Pools are:

Centennial, opened 1958...Steveston, opened 1970...South Arm, opened 1972.

Swimming is growing the same all over the province... wherever there's a pool, there's a club.

BCSSA has grown from 4 clubs in 1965 to over 100 clubs. There are 7,000 swimming in province. Rules state summer swimming is May 1 to Sept. 30. Winter swimming comes under Canadian Amateur Swimming Association.

Two gold medal winners in Richmond club...must get a gold medal in provincial or international championships four years in a row to get Municipal Gold Medal. Two are: John Doughty, 15 years old and Bruce Hedges, 22 years old.

Only other swimming medal winner is Craig Beatty, a winter swimmer.

Few summer swimmers go on to Olympics...rather it is a fun thing...it takes 2,000 swimmers to make 1 champion.

Ladies Recreational Swim:

Held May and June...a fun program to get mothers out... a fund raising effort...started 1965 with 20 ladies...doesn't make much money now because municipality charges pool time... now held in 2 pools, Steveston and South Arm...this year had 100 mothers and 40 children or more...always stops end of June when school gets out...then municipal swim lessons take over.

Richmond Swim Club president 1973 is Dr. Wm. Doughty and is affiliated with BCSSA.

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Difference between winter swim and summer swim...total commitment...must give everything to winter swim...time consuming and expensive for winter swimming. In summer swimming kids can handle other sports such as baseball and lacrosse.

Children only pay \$15.00 this season for summer swim... includes entries to meets...municipality doesn't charge pool time...\$15 goes to club expenses, raise money above that.

Worthwhile when for enjoyment of children.

All sports for children now too organized ...too technical... little kids at 5 years start playing hockey, lacrosse.

Diving:

Needs good coach...club has only 5 or 6 kids training... coach can handle only about 5 in 1 hour compared to 100 swimmers...only 1 or 2 divers in 1973...championships also end of August...very expensive sport, specialized...only answer: money. In beginning Dean coached the divers in his off-duty time while a lifeguard...less population then... to coach divers must have 1 meter or 3 metre diving board... Centennial Pool only qualifying equipment in Richmond.  
1973: Richmond Swim Club handles 163 swimmers.

Requirements for competitive swimmers:

Dedication to the sport

Natural tendency for the sport

Money

(Dellis Cleland)