

RICHMOND LAWN BOWLING CLUB

Interviewed: May 26, 1976

Tape 68, 3

Written by: Mrs. Ella Jackson,
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In 1963 the Vancouver Lawn Bowling Club at 26th Street and Selkirk closed down. They expected to open a new green in Queen Elizabeth Park.

The Richmond members of that club decided that they would try and get a bowling green in Richmond. Art and Ella Jackson, Bill Anderson, Ollie and Irene Hall, formed a committee and worked hard to get important people interested in the project. They were very successful.

At this time Minoru Park was being extended and developed. Space was allotted for recreation and sports such as a swimming pool, a skating rink, a tennis court and a ball field. Why not a bowling green for the older citizens of Richmond?

The committee approached the Council with the proposition. The Council seemed sympathetic but advised them that they must be registered as a club and have a certain paid-up membership.

March 18th, 1966 a letter was sent to the Reeve and Council advising them that under the B. C. Societies Act the club had been registered as the Richmond Lawn Bowling Club. We had the required number of paid-up members. A temporary executive was elected:

President	Percy Richards
Secretary	Charles Hugles
Treasurer	Art Jackson

Directors were:

N. Donaghy	G. Clark	Ken Curtis
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The Richmond Municipal Council and the Richmond Lawn Bowling Club came to an agreement whereby space for two bowling greens was allotted to the club. One to be developed at once, the other in the future when the need arose.

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The Parks Board would make and maintain the green but the club must lease from them the land upon which to build a club house. We must build our own club house at our own expense but if the green ceased to operate the club house would revert to the Municipality.

It takes two years to build a green. The work started in 1966. Meanwhile we were a registered bowling club without a green to play on.

Arrangements were made with Ladner Lawn Bowling Club to allow us to bowl on their green Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons. The rates were 50¢ per person per game. Our club fees were \$5.00 for men and \$2.00 for ladies.

The club bought a few sets of second-hand bowls and some members bought their own. We were in business!

We were an enthusiastic group. Some were as green as the grass they played on, as to the technique of the game. But we had so much fun getting the hang of it and trying to keep the rules of play. Sometimes our enthusiasm over-ruled our decorum. After our game we had tea or coffee and cookies. Each paid a dime toward the cost of the refreshments.

The ladies quickly formed an auxiliary for the purpose of helping to promote the club.

The site which the Parks Board allotted us is in a beautiful setting. It is located at the north-east corner of Minoru Park. The entrance is from Westminster Highway. Lawn and young trees surrounded the green. We get a splendid view of the mountains and of Minoru Chapel. We are completely away from noise and traffic. A most beautiful location where sunshine, fresh air and cool breezes abound.

For two summers (1966 & 1967) we enjoyed bowling at Ladner. We watched our green in Minoru Park developing.

Our Executives at this time were:

President	Ken Curtis
Vice-President	Ernie Gillies
Secretary	W. Heywood
Treasurer	C. Hughes

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The Directors were:

N. Donaghy George Clark Sandy Cooper

Finally the green was ready and May 11, 1968 was set as the official Opening Day of the Richmond Lawn Bowling Club.

Bill Anderson was in charge of games and the ladies were in charge of food. The whole club helped.

Since we had no club house, no furnishings, no water --- only our new green, the opening day was a truly pioneer effort.

The day was perfect.

After a speech of appreciation to our Council, Recreation Committee and Parks Board, by our President, Ernie Gillies, Don Harwood representing Richmond Recreation, officially opened the "green". He then delivered the first bowl. Art Jackson having placed the first jack.

The 40 members present drew for teams and a short game was played. The greens were new and pretty heavy but we had a lot of fun.

Then followed our lunch (Smorgasbord style). We used a 4'x8' sheet of plywood placed on two boxes for a table. We borrowed dishes and cutlery from Richmond United Church. We had a Coleman camp stove to boil the water for tea. Gladys Windrim brought a large urn of coffee perked ready. There was so much delicious food provided by our ladies! Sandwiches, salads, cold meats, celery, pickles, cakes and cookies. Lots of tea and coffee. We had no chairs but we sat on the walk around the green.

We were a proud and happy group with great hopes for the future of our club.

In 1970 the green was in full operation. Now a club house must be built. The Municipality leased us the land for the building for \$1.00 per year. They agreed to put down a cement slab for the foundation.

The Building Committee explored many plans but finally brought to the club the plan of a pre-fabricated building (Pan Abode #222). It would be easy to construct and be more quickly ready. The cost was estimated at \$9,500. This included plumbing, electric wiring and stove.

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We had on hand from fees and raffles: \$2,300. The Credit Union would lend us \$8,000 at 9½% yearly. The loan to be paid back in monthly payments covering interest and principal. The balance payable at any time. This plan was adopted.

Under the able direction of Bill Anderson (a builder by trade) construction began.

Our men were organized into groups for different jobs.

In July the days are long. The men hurried home from their work and then away to the "green" to work on the club house. Each to his allotted job. Saturdays and Sundays they worked all day. The women did their part too.

They formed a permanent Woman's Auxiliary. They took turns bringing ten o'clock coffee, noon lunch and sometimes even supper to the working men. Cold drinks were always in supply.

The foundation was laid by the Parks Board and the men began the sorting and placing of the pieces; the erection of the frame; the siding; the roofing; fitting windows and doors; putting up eave-troughs; staining and painting; and finally tiling the floor.

They started construction in July 1969 and had their first meeting in the new club house - Saturday, September 6th, 1969.

Money was raised by various means to meet the payments. Members fees now risen to \$20.00 for men and \$10.00 for ladies, raffles, sale of peanuts, etc. A great financial help was the renting of the club house for use as a Kindergarten on a monthly basis of \$100.00 a month. This also solved the problem of caretaking.

Of course, there were the furnishing to buy --- chairs, tables, dishes, cutlery, a frig, etc.

The Woman's Auxiliary took care of the furnishing of curtains, table cloths, etc.

The Opening of the Season in 1970 was a very jubilant one. The whole operation had been a great success. Every member had done a full share in the building of Richmond Lawn Bowling Club. It was the spirit of co-operation that accomplished the task.

The motto of the club is: "Good Sportsmanship, Good Fellowship and Keen but Fair Competition!"

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To name outstanding members would be difficult. One would have to name them all.

July 24, 1975 the mortgage to Credit Union was paid off. Our club is debt free!

In 1976 the club is opening with a membership of 60 paid-up members.

They are contemplating the extension of the club house to accommodate the increasing membership and they are considering the opening of the other green.

The future of the club looks bright indeed!