

## **125 YEARS of the VANCOUVER ROWING CLUB**

*Gleanings from Jack Carver's "The Vancouver Rowing Club – A History 1886 – 1980"*

*Compiled by Honorary Vice President, Norman Jack in 1999.*

*Additional sources from the VRC archives.*

### **Part 1 – OUR HISTORY**

"That a club to be called the Vancouver Rowing Club be formed, the charter members of which to be all the members of the Vancouver Boating Club and the Burrard Inlet Rowing Club who are in good standing."

With this motion being passed unanimously by a meeting of both clubs on April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1899, our present club came into being.

The VBC was the more senior of the two clubs, having been formed in 1886, the year of Vancouver's incorporation as a city. This is reflected by that year being emblazoned on our Club Crest. The BIRC was formed four years later. Our roots in the Vancouver Boating Club establish us as the oldest amateur sports organization in Vancouver, and the second oldest in British Columbia.

The previous fall a combined crew from both the founding clubs had defeated a Portland crew by five lengths. This success had led to thoughts of amalgamation, and both clubs held meetings over the winter to discuss this matter.

Both founding clubs had floating clubhouses and 1905 saw these moored at the foot of Bute Street. As the CPR required this site for an extension of the wharf, the club approached the city with a view to obtain a suitable alternative site. Two sites were offered, one at the foot of Denman Street, and the other was Lot 14 Park Bridge. Lot 14 was described as "in Stanley Park, just past the bridge, below the bear pit". The club held a special general meeting to choose a site. On June 20, 1905, a tug towed over the houses and floats to Lot 14, the site we still occupy today.

In 1910, the decision was made to erect a new clubhouse. Plans were made for "a reading room, reception hall, ballroom, gymnasium and accommodation for all racing boats, canoes and training quarters for the crews". The Provincial Construction Company won the contract with a bid of \$13,000. The final cost was closer to \$15,000, of which nearly \$10,000 was raised through the sale of \$100 Life Memberships. The new clubhouse was officially opened on September 9, 1911. This building was essentially what we have today, without the Trophy Lounge; which was added in 1936. In 1990 the VRC clubhouse received heritage designation from the Vancouver City Council.

The North Pacific Association of Oarsmen, of which our two founding clubs were members, held its first regatta in Vancouver on August 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 1892. Up until the outbreak of war on August 4, 1914, those clubs and the VRC competed regularly. One of our founding clubs, the BIRC, dominated the 1892 competition. The Advertiser reported: "BIRC members were happy over an almost unbroken line of victories. Every wharf and ship in the harbour was thronged with spectators... the Senior Fours event had the crowd cheering madly as the BIRC crew won by two feet... with the VBC, having worse water and an outgoing tide, four lengths behind."

In the Senior Fours race referred to, Bob Johnston rowed 2<sup>nd</sup>. He later became a world-renowned professional sculler and was coached by the great Ned Hanlan. Johnston became the first recipient of Ned Hanlan's Cane, which now resides in the VRC trophy case as our most treasured belonging. The VBC's first NPAAO victory was in 1895 Junior Fours, later dubbed "the Sponge Race". The BIRC continued to dominate, with minor exceptions, the Ferguson Cup (for championship of the harbour) until the two clubs merged to form the Vancouver Rowing Club in 1899.

The First recorded VPAAO win by the VRC in Jack Carver's book was in 1907 with CG Laing winning both the Junior and Senior singles. In 1908, the NPAAO had decided against having oared races because of the expense involved in transporting the shells. Although all clubs were in favour of eights being included, it was not until 1947 that this happened. Also in 1908, Reggie Woodward first got the oarsmen playing rugby. He did not go out and recruit players, but encouraged those VRC members playing for other clubs to play for the VRC. All were oarsmen as well as rugby players. This dual sport participation lasted through to the early fifties. Unfortunately the commitment required by both sports now probably makes it impossible to participate in both at any competitive level. In 1908, the club lost all its games in the City Senior League and in 1909, lost all but one. In 1910 they won all 10 games and the Miller Cup, scoring 186 points to 5 against.

1913 saw the club start an ice hockey team, which was entered in the City Senior League. It was the class of the league, winning all its games and on January 21, 1914 the City Championship. The war intervened and it was not revived in 1919.

At the outbreak of WWI ninety VRC members volunteered immediately. Of the VRC active list at the beginning of the war 115 members were eligible for military service. During the course of the war another 49, under the age limit at the start, enlisted making a total of 164 volunteers. This, out of an active membership of 200, brought activity at the club almost to a halt. A spring regatta was held in 1915, although with few events and contestants. The summer rowing regatta of 1914 was the last held until the end of the war. Rugby was discontinued and the Vancouver Rugby Union did not re-organize until 1919. In 1917, at the AGM, Life members were asked to donate not less than \$5 towards the upkeep of the club, owing to the fact so many members were on active service. In 1918 the club roster numbered only 35, not one of whom was a single man fit for service.

The 1920s saw a resurgence in the Club's activities with increasing membership and renewal of competition in rowing and rugby after the lack of it during the war years. 1924 brought the first Olympic medals to members of the VRC with Colin Finlayson, George Mackay, Archie Black and Bill Wood winning the silver at the Paris

games and becoming known as “the Paris Four”. On the rugby field, the Club won the Miller Cup in 1921, 1922, 1924 and 1929.

Ever since the clubhouse had been built, most of the members who owned pleasure boats moored them at floats alongside, but as membership increased more floats were needed. In the spring of 1926 an additional float was obtained. A committee of “Motor Boat Owners” was organized to allot moorage space and was the start of what was to be called the “Mooring Section”, and later the “Yachting Section”. The revenue from these moorage rentals helped provide money needed to operate the club.

In 1927, Colonel Victor Spencer of the VRC had arranged races for the sculling championship of the world to take place in Vancouver between M. Goodsell, an Australian, and B. Barry, from England. These races created a great deal of interest and attracted large numbers of spectators. The resulting interest brought a boom in local sculling.

A magnificent silver cup (still in the VRC trophy case) was donated by Sir Thomas Lipton for the Single Sculls Championship of Vancouver. The first winner of this trophy in 1928 was OE (Ed) Snead. Many of our older members will remember Ed as our Honorary Secretary.

The Spring Regatta of 1931 was won by the VRC eight. This is believed to be the first race in Canada broadcast by radio. Tom Quirk, whom many members will recall as a faithful fixture at club events, was stroke in this crew.

The Rugby team won the Miller Cup in 1931 and again in 1932. Six members of the team were selected to be on the Canada team which toured Japan in 1931.

The year 1932 saw the Depression well established. To aid members, rowing dues were reduced from \$25 to \$15, which could be paid in installments. This was also the year of the Los Angeles Olympics. Ned Pratt and Noel de Mille of the club represented Canada in the doubles and brought back bronze medals to give the club a second crew of Olympic medalists.

Also in 1932, those members mooring their boats at the club formed themselves into the Burrard Yacht Club.

## **Part II – THE FRANK READ YEARS**

### **Into the International Spotlight**

The Depression years began with major achievements for the athletes of the VRC. At the 1931 NPAAO Regatta, the VRC won all the single sculling events: Babs Jaggard, the Junior; Ed Snead, the 140lbs; Noel de Mille, the Senior; and Ned Pratt, the Quarter Mile Dash. The Rugby Team won the Miller Cup in 1931 and again in 1932. In 1932 Ed Snead won the Junior 140lb Singles at the Canadian Henley.

The same year, Ned Pratt and Noel de Mille represented Canada at the Los Angeles Olympics and took the bronze in the doubles. Another VRC crew, which had been unable to row in the Olympic Trials due to the Depression, decided to go to Los Angeles on its own. With \$800 assistance from the club, Bill Merritt, Don MacKenzie, Frank Read and Alex Gordon piled oars and baggage into MacKenzie's 1929 Model A roadster and drove 1,900 miles to Long Beach to compete in a post-Olympic Pacific Association of Amateur Oarsmen Regatta. In a borrowed shell, with a borrowed Coxswain, they defeated a San Diego crew in a time four seconds faster than the US Olympic winners. Immediately following that victory Merritt won the Junior Singles. Fresh from their Olympic success Pratt and de Mille joined the four and easily won the Doubles, which de Mille followed by taking the Senior Singles. In all, the six brought back to Vancouver four Pacific Coast Championship trophies and two Olympic bronze medals.

The VRC faced a deficit at the end of 1932, due to the exceptional expenses of the year. These included a new doubles shell for Pratt and de Mille and \$600 for the construction of a new mooring float for the club's yachtsmen who, in this year, formed themselves into the Burrard Yacht Club. It was finances that continued to dog the club throughout the decade. The NPAAO did not hold a regatta in 1933 – the first time this had happened since WWI. In 1934, the Club's long time caretaker and equipment repairer, "Skipper" Jaggard, constructed the first eight ever built in Canada, the "SC Sweeny", which George Pocock pronounced perfect. In 1935 Monty Butler and Johnny Dickinson traveled to St. Catherines to compete in the Royal Canadian Henley, where they won both Doubles events, and Butler won both the 140lb Junior and Senior Singles. They returned to a ticker-tape welcome in Vancouver. Local rugby was dominated by UBC's "wonder teams" from 1935 to 1938.

With a slow return from the depths of the depression in 1939 the club developed large scale expansion plans. It was planned to add Cricket, Wrestling, Football, Table Tennis and Track & Field. The plans ended with the first group of members departing for overseas in WWII. Cricket was the only sport to make it and the first games were played that summer.

By the end of hostilities, 176 members had been in service. Unlike WWI, sports at the club managed to continue at a much-reduced level. High school rowing continued and visiting servicemen with under age youths kept Rugby and Cricket operating. From 1942 to 1944, a large part of the club's main floor was taken by HMCS Discovery for storage.

After six years of war, few pre-war oarsmen returned to active rowing and high school rowing had failed to bring in many full members. In 1949, it was decided that steps had to be taken to increase rowing membership and as a result a new arrangement was made with the University of British Columbia. The club agreed that the students would become full members with the university paying half, and the students the other half. The annual dues having returned to \$25. These new members were called the VRC/UBC oarsmen.

Frank Read took on coaching these crews with an annual budget of \$200, compared to the University of Washington's \$70,000. With an arduous training schedule involving an hour or two every morning and evening seven days a week, these student crews started to show results against the US University crews on the West Coast.

In the meantime, plans were progressing for Vancouver to play host to the 1954 British Empire Games. After astounding the Canadian rowing establishment by soundly defeating much-favoured eastern crews to represent Canada at the games, on August 5<sup>th</sup> the VRC/UBC "Cinderella" crew faced off against a heavily favoured English eight:

"The biggest upset in the 1954 games occurred... when the Canadian Eight, a crew of green kids from [UBC] finished the 2,000 meter course two and a half lengths ahead of the English shell... The Canadians, after a faltering start when they caught two crabs in the first eight strokes – which nearly brought their lunging shell to a stop - caught up with the Englishmen at the 500 meter mark and, with an unbelievable, sustained, 40-to-the-minute stroke pushed steadily ahead from then on. This amazing crew had had only one race during the 1953 college term, and only a few races between that time and the Games; some members had never grasped an oar before last February. This unheralded and unorthodox eight from UBC won for Canada her first ever gold medal in rowing events at any games." (from The Official History of the Fifth British Empire and Commonwealth Games.)

HRH the Duke of Edinburgh, who attended the BEG rowing events, upon meeting Frank Read shortly following the upset remarked, "You must come to Henley". It was taken as a Royal Command and the decision was made to enter the eight in next summer's Henley. Nelles Stacey set about raising the necessary funds and by the spring of 1955 had raised \$25,000. Following their final exams in April, the crew ate, slept and trained twice daily at the club while also working to raise funds for the following year's tuition.

On July 1<sup>st</sup> (Dominion Day) 1955, the "Cinderella" crew faced the defending Russian champions: "the Russians jumped to a quick three quarter length lead, rowing a 43 ½ to Vancouver's 42. At the quarter-mile the Russians dropped their rate to 36, Vancouver to 33. Then our crew spurted and at the half-mile post Russia's lead had been cut to six feet. By the three-quarters post we were ahead by six feet. When that was announced, the vast crowd, expecting an easy win by the Russians, rose and let out a roar. To an ever-increasing din our boys gradually drew away to win by 1 ¼ lengths. A tremendous reception awaited them at the boathouse as the crowds left the stands to see the winners." (from the Vancouver Rowing Club by J. Carver). The next day in the Grand Challenge final the VRC/UBC eight lost narrowly to the University of Pennsylvania crew by 1/3 of a length, but their defeat of the Russians remained the highlight of that year's Henley Royal Regatta.

The crew returned as the darlings of Canada. Congratulations on their exiting performance came from the House of Commons. Mayor Hume of Vancouver welcomed the crew home at the airport, and after a motorcade through the city gave a formal address on the courthouse steps and presented each member of the crew with an inscribed gold medal.

During this period activity at the clubhouse had begun to pick up. Club rowing was gaining steam in part due to the interest caused by the approaching BE Games and later by the success of the VRC/UBC crew. The NPAAO held its first regatta since 1939 in August of 1954. In 1955 VRC Rugby won the Miller Cup for the first time since 1932. Cricket was also gaining strength, winning the Fyfe Smith Shield (BC Mainland 1<sup>st</sup> Division Championship) in 1956 and 1957, and in 1959 fielded three teams for the first time.

## **PART III – OLYMPIC GOLD**

### **The Frank Read Years Continue**

Shortly after the return of the VRC/UBC “Cinderella” crew from Henley it was announced that half the crew had rowed their last race. Hearing this, the Canadian Olympic Association dropped its plans to send an Eight to the 1956 Olympic games the following year.

A new Eight was formed, combining the veterans Phil Kueber, Doug McDonald, Laurie West, Bob Wilson and Cal Ogawa (cox) with their fellow junior clubsmen; David Helliwell, Dick McClure, Bill McKerlich and Wayne Pretty. In March 1956 this crew defeated a Washington Huskies crew by eight in Coal Harbour, causing the Canadian Olympic Association to reverse their earlier decision and agree to hold trials to send an Eight to Melbourne.

For the next three months (excluding April for exams), the eight trained twice daily at 6am and 5:30pm, living together in a house rented at 1888 West Georgia Street. Training alongside them was a new coxless four stroked by one-year veteran Don Arnold and three new rowers – Walter d’Hondt, Lorne Loomer and Archie MacKinnon – and coached by John Warren. Early in May they caught the eye of Frank Read, who remarked “they don’t look like much, but they sure move the boat!”.

By the time of the trials in St. Catherines on July 24<sup>th</sup>, the crews had rowed 1,250 miles and were in top. The Four won both their races by run-away margins and in record times. The Eight won by four lengths in 49:6. Initially the Four were not included in the Olympic Associations loans for Melbourne. However, under much pressure, including Lieutenant Governor Frank Ross’ offer to underwrite their trip, the COA relented, making it an all VRC/UBC Canadian Olympic Rowing Team.

In Melbourne, the Four astounded the world by winning their first heat by six lengths and their semi-final by a whopping ten lengths. In the final they defeated the US crew by five lengths with Italy and France following – Canada’s first-ever Olympic gold medal in rowing!

The Eight narrowly missed capturing another gold, losing by a quarter length to a US Yale crew; three of whom collapsed at the finish line with two requiring medical attention. The VRC/UBC crew brought home Olympic silver, Canada’s only silver of the games.

Once again, there was a grand parade through the city streets to a reception at the clubhouse with presentations from the city and from the Lieutenant Governor Frank Ross.

In 1957, after seven years of voluntary coaching, Frank Read retired and John Warren (his former student) took over preparing crews for the 1958 British Empire Games to be held in Wales. Three VRC/UBC crews were chosen to represent Canada at the BE Games: an Eight, a Four and a Coxed Four with the crews composed primarily of the ’56 Olympians, with D. Arnold, W. d’Hondt and coxswain S. Biln doing double duty

in the Eight and Coxed Four. Canada retained its Empire Games Championship with the Eight winning the Gold. Both Fours took silver medals, losing to English crews.

In 1959, David Helliwell (of the '56 Eight), took over coaching duties and led an Eight and a Coxed Four to the PanAm Games in Chicago, where the Eight took a silver and the Four a bronze.

Throughout the fifties, club rowing steadily picked up with the club rowers regularly competing with rowers from clubs in Washington, Kelowna, Penticton and Shawnigan Lake. Unfortunately in 1955, after seventeen years, the High School Rowing Scholarship Program came to an end, as the club could no longer maintain its equipment due to the heavy demand from the University and Club crews. Cricket was also gaining strength, winning the Fyfe Smith Shield (BC Mainland 1<sup>st</sup> Division Championship) in 1956 and 1957 and in the 1959 fielding three teams for the first time.

Strengthened by recruits from Commonwealth countries, for the first time since 1932 the Rugby team won the Miller Cup in 1955. The Rugby boys of the early 60s also showed a flair for seven-a-sides, winning the Bob Spray Cup (1<sup>st</sup> Division) in 1959, 1960 and 1963, and being finalists in 1961, 1964, 1965 and 1966. 2<sup>nd</sup> Division players captured the Nelles Stacey Cup in 1960 and 1962 and were finalists in 1957, 1963 and 1964.

The run up to the 1960 Olympics in Rome saw the return of Frank Read with the Eight of G. Mervyn, W. d'Hondt, W. McKerlich, N. Kuhn, D. Arnold, A. MacKinnon, D. Anderson, J. Lecky and S. Biln as cox. In a close race against a favored veteran German crew the two boats were neck and neck until, with 200 meters to go, the Germans pulled ahead to win by four seconds with a time of 5:57:18, the second fastest time in Olympic history. Eric Whitehead, reporting for The Province wrote:

"...the finish had 20,000 fans on their feet roaring for Canada to hold on. Among them, calling "Canada! Canada!" was Queen Juliana of the Netherlands... after the race, US rowing boss Tip Goes said "for a crew that only started training in May, this was fantastic. This was the most marvelous performance I have ever seen... This German crew is the pick of 40,000 oarsmen from 800 rowing clubs and have been training together for two years."

Once again the silver medal crew returned to civic celebrations as Canada's only medalists at the Rome Olympics. Frank Read retired after these Olympics and this silver medal finish marked the end of the Frank Read Era, although his legacy would continue for years to come. He had placed himself among the top rowing coaches in the world and crews he had coached – and those coming out of his legacy – had obtained an impressive international record by 1960: three gold medals, five silver medals, one bronze medal and finalists in the Grand Challenge at Henley.

The club's international rowing record continued with Laurie West (of the original "Cinderella" crew) taking over the coaching of the VRC/UBC crews. After setting a world record (5:30:7) at the BEG trials in St. Catherines in 1962 the VRC/UBC Eight faced disappointing finishes at both the first World Rowing Championships and the Commonwealth Games. The club's Four (E. Worobieff, T. Gray, T. Stokes and R. McIntosh) took bronze at the Commonwealth Games. This was followed by a gold medal victory for our Eight

at the PanAm Games in 1963 (P. Browne, M. Lemieux, E. Worobieff, T. Gray, M. Wiczorek, D. Dewar, D. Sturdy, B. Stubbs and d. Overton – cox).

The 1964 Olympic Games were held in Tokyo and once again two VRC/UBC crews represented Canada: an Eight who had a disappointing ninth place finish; and two spares for the eight who made up a pair, George Hungerford and Roger Jackson who won the gold! Their victory was made all the more remarkable by the fact they had only worked together for a little over two weeks and had only raced together twice – the first race being their Olympic year, which they won and the second race the Olympic final!

The gold medal at Tokyo was the last Olympic medal to be won by a club team. At the 1968 Olympics all Canadian entries were eliminated, including the VRC/UBC rowers R. Jackson, Single Sculls and J. Ulinder and L. Galey, Pair. In 1972 Canada adopted a National Rowing Team with composite crews formed from club rowers across Canada. VRC/UBC continued to be well represented on the national teams and occasionally entire crews would be formed from the members of a single club. But it was effectively the end of International Club Rowing (with notable exceptions). The Vancouver Rowing Club's Olympic record of two gold, three silver and one bronze tops all other rowing clubs in Canada, accounting for six of the thirteen medals won from 1904 to 1964 and all of the country's gold medal victories up to that date.

#### **Part IV – INTO THE MODERN ERA**

The sustained international competition of the 50s with its accompanying strain on fundraising efforts obscured the serious situation that had been developing in the deterioration of the Clubhouse. Following an engineer's report in 1962, the building was condemned. All athletic activities on the premises were curtailed and general gatherings were banned. A test of the original gumwood piles proved they were still sound, and still level with one another! In 1963, at a cost of \$17,000, the structure was reinforced with steel and the building saved. Another \$25,000 was spent to modernize the interior. In 1971 further considerable expense was incurred to reinforce the pilings.

It was also in 1971 that the first women's rowing crew was formed. Unbelievably, this was the first women's crew to be formed in Canada! We've learned that the press photo heralding this event was somewhat "doctored", the crew in the photo being comprised primarily of barmaids from a local tavern. Nonetheless, women's rowing quickly caught on and in 1971 a ladies changing and shower room were added to the clubhouse.

The 70s saw the addition of two new sections: Field Hockey in 1974 and Tennis in 1975. The Tennis section eventually grew to a membership of 200 and, in conjunction with the Vancouver Parks Board, organized and ran what, at the time, was the largest amateur tennis tournament in Canada.

Meanwhile, the Cricket section had begun to thrive with Cliff Cox, the Cricket Captain, being chosen to Captain the Canadian national team in 1969 and again in 1970. The VRC Cricket 1<sup>st</sup> Division won the BC Mainland Championship for five consecutive years from 1973 to 1977.



VRC/UBC rowing crews continued their strong international tradition, representing Canada at the PanAm Games: in 1967 with silver medal finishes for both our Eight and Coxless Four (B. Clark, P. Webber, A. Netupsky, R. Fearn); in 1971 with a bronze medal finish for our Eight (E. Smith, K. Jonker, R. Bell-Irving, M. Neary, R. Advent, J. Walker, R. Cunliffe, I. Gordon and M. Conway – cox); and again in 1975 with UBC/VRC members taking part in composite crews for silver in the Coxed Pair and bronze in the Coxless Four.

In 1974, when the club was celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, HRH Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, accepted our invitation to become our Patron. Four years later, on a sunny August 8<sup>th</sup>, the Duke of Edinburgh, accompanied by Prince Andrew, delighted over 150 members and friends with an informal visit to our club. Prince Andrew was subsequently made an Honorary Life Member of the club.

The 1976 VRC/UBC crews conceived a tour to the Henley Royal Regatta, and were financially helped by “Friends of Rowing”, their families and by the individuals themselves. The Eight and the Coxed Four went on to win the Steward’s Cup, presented by HRH Princess Alexandra.

The Olympic Games in Montreal that year saw VRC women competing in the first female crews: Cheryl Howard in the Double Sculls; Tricia Smith in the Coxless Pair; Susan Antoft and Ilona Smith in the Eight; and Joy Fera in the Coxed Four.

1976 was also one of the club’s darkest years. A split had developed between the VRC and the Burrard Yacht Club over finances. This culminated in a lawsuit that was resolved in June 1976 with BC Supreme Court Justice McKenzie ruling in favour of the club. The Burrard Yacht Club shortly after obtained new facilities in North Vancouver, where it resides today.

The club installed a new network of floats, financed in part through the issuance of Moorage Debentures. These were soon occupied and the Vancouver Rowing Club Yachting Section, as we know it today, came into being in 1978. Through the late 70s and into the 80s, the Yachting Section continued to grow. With their competitive racing throughout the year the “new” Yachting Section brought a more sports-attuned feeling to the Club than had been present in the BYC association.

1973 saw the Rugby Section winning the Tisall for the first time since 1925. That year also saw the Rugby Section’s first overseas tour, a seven-game affair covering Wales, Scotland and England. The Club’s 1<sup>st</sup> Fifteen won the 1979/80 League Championship and the Miller Cup for the first time since the 1954/55 season, edging the UBC Old Boys 3-0. The previous year they had been beaten in the final by Ex Britannia.

Rugby continued to tour regularly throughout the 70s and 80s as did both the Field Hockey and Cricket sections. All three sections also saw many of their players being chosen to play for their respective national teams as Canada’s international representation and results in these sports continually improved. The club was rewarded with strong membership figures from the sections with membership reaching approximately 1,300 in 1988.

In 1979 the club’s Canadian Championship Eight was chosen to represent Canada at the PanAm Games where they took silver (Richardson, Withers, Felix, Hartvikson, Wilkinson, Catherall, Orr, Hood and Coxen M. Conway). This was the first time a non-competitive crew had been chosen since 1971. VRC/UBC was

also well-represented at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics with fourteen rowers attending the Games and five medaling (2 gold, 2 silver and a bronze). Former Club President Cathy Lund (our first female President), also competed at these games on the Canadian Women's Eight placing fourth.

In the mid-1980s the clubhouse was again in a serious state of deterioration. The 70+-year old gumwood pillars had finally begun to rot, and the club was slowly sinking into the harbour. With water lapping into the building the clubhouse was closed again.

Operations moved to other locales and a huge fundraising effort "Operation Landmark" began. The project of lifting the building onto new legs proved long, daunting and expensive.

Due to the costs imposed on members through increased membership fees and assessments, as well as complications arising with their playing areas, both Cricket and Tennis ceased to be active sections by the time the project was complete in 1988. All sections lost significant numbers during this period. This did not diminish the resolve of members that remained.

Rugby's 1<sup>st</sup> Division again took the Miller Cup in 1988/89. A VRC coxed Four won the Prince Philip Cup at the 1988 Henley Royal Regatta and competed at the Seoul Olympics. Yachting was involved in local yacht racing, in VARC (Vancouver Area Racing Council) as well as in international races such as Swiftsure and the Vic-Maui. Field Hockey continued to play, tour and socialize as aggressively as always and were well represented on the national team. Rugby had nineteen members take international honors from 1983 to 1996.

Renewed energy was also expended on the clubhouse with members adding the Carver Room, renovating the Main Hall and rebuilding the Trophy Lounge in the early 90s. Installation of a fire suppression system and a new vacuum pumpout system all added to approximately two million dollars in upgrades and renovations since the 1980s.

Rowing, Rugby and Field Hockey have maintained their commitment to nurturing and developing youth activity in sport, either by offering programs directly or by supplying volunteer coaching to high school programs, in most cases both.