

The History of Beacon Hill Pool



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Something that I think affected the City of Beaconsfield, or more specifically the streets around Beacon Hill, is the Beacon Hill pool. This pool was made in 1966 and took about three months to build. I am actually very lucky because I happen to know one of the community members that helped make the pool possible. He happens to be an engineer and also my grandfather.

I picked this event because this pool was made before a few other pools and is also operated differently, which probably affected the pools that were made after its construction. I am also doing this assignment on Richard Edwards because I am very proud of what he did and his work affected the building and final result of Beacon Hill Pool.

Richard Edwards

Richard Edwards was 33 years old when he was working on Beacon Hill Pool. He started the project nine years after he moved to Canada in 1956 with his wife, Elizabeth Moira John. He came to Canada (from Wales) to

work for Shawinigan Engineering. He also came to Canada one year before that, as a student, but ended up going back to Wales to get married to his wonderful Moira.



Richard was one of the first members of the pool (fourth or fifth) and, for a while, he went to the pool with his family. About fifteen years later, he decided to build his own pool in the back of his house, so Richard and his family stopped going to Beacon Hill pool. He was actually the back door neighbor of Carolyn Waldo, who was friends with Richard's second child, Jane Edwards.

Beacon Hill Pool

Linda Gettes was probably the reason the pool is here today, since she was the one who started it all. Linda had three daughters. She wanted to have a swimming pool for her daughters to swim in so she went around the community asking for help and trying to find a few people that were willing

to help her. She finally found someone that said he was willing to be the leader of the group but he knew nothing of engineering or pool construction, so they kept looking for more participants. After talking around the community, they found five other people, including Richard Edwards, who were willing to help.

At the time, Beaconsfield was a small city and didn't have much money and Beaconsfield's City Hall couldn't afford to build Beacon Hill a pool. The Beacon Hill residents realized that they had to find ways to do things themselves because they knew if they asked City Hall for a pool it would never happen. Knowing that, they took matters into their own hands and agreed to make a pool themselves.

Being one of a few, Richard Edwards was in charge of carrying out the basic design and supervising the construction, including the design and construction of the buildings. Richard was not alone on the job. There were seven people working as the pool committee with him, including Mr. Soroka (engineer) and Mr. Fogarty (who lived two houses from Richard). Along with the pool committee, there were about twenty to thirty construction workers

working on the actual building of the pool after the pool committee had finished their work.

Beacon Hill Pool was built and developed at the same time Beacon Hill was developing, which meant that there actually weren't many streets in Beacon Hill and most of the other cities didn't even exist. At that time, it was the only pool which was completely owned (the pool association owned the property of the land) and operated by the pool association.

It was the pool committee that created a private organization that owned the land and sold shares. The shares were sold to Beacon Hill families only and were limited to one share per house, to make sure that no "special interest" group would control the pool. At the very beginning there were about two hundred and eighty shares (house shares). The Edwards family and the Waldo family were some of the first members of the pool.

Three people out of the committee, the engineers, designed the pool and managed the construction, while the other members of the committee wrote the bylaws (rules and regulations), sold the shares and arranged for financing. All the committee members were doing their jobs. Mrs. Gettes

was giving out promotions and the president was negotiating to buy the property. Everybody played their part in the building of the pool.

In the winter of 1967, the construction subcommittee inspected about fifteen Montreal pools before deciding upon their final decision. The pool was built to be a quarter of an Olympic pool, twenty-five meters, with a separate but attached part where the diving boards would be and the diving would take place. The diving area had a depth of three meters and was considered one of the deeper pools. There was also a section for little kids to play in which was called the kiddy pool and it had its own separate water purification system (I wonder why...!).

One of the arguments they had was the fact that some people wanted the pool to be a family oriented pool and they wanted to avoid "elite" functions (specialized diving, etc...) and some wanted it to be like the other pools and have all the swim team and synchro lessons. The side that wanted a family oriented pool won but after a while faded and the pool became like the others. But if you look on the bright side, we have an Olympian, Carolyn Waldo, who went to Beacon Hill Pool.

From the very beginning to the very end, it took all the participants about ten months to build the whole pool. After all their hard work, the pool opened in August 1967. From the looks of it, I think Beacon Hill Pool turned out pretty well and I hope that it stays in the same condition it is now, for a long time.

This pool was a very good decision and without it no one in Beacon Hill and even around it would know how to swim or have a place to go when they want to have fun with their friends, relax or even get a summer job. From the day it was opened to today, it has influenced everybody's life in some sort of way.

Today, Richard Edwards is teaching at McGill University at the age of 76. He has three children and four grandchildren that he loves and cherishes with all his heart. His grandchildren, like his children did, attend Beacon Hill School and occasionally swim at Beacon Hill pool with their school. Richard still lives in Beacon Hill with his wife, Moira, and does engineering work, including inspecting houses and buildings in Beaconsfield and other cities.



References

I would like to thank my grandfather, Richard Edwards, for sharing all of what he knew.

I would also like to thank www.beaconhillcommunity.org for giving me some parts of information that was needed.

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