



**d'ESTERRE HOUSE SENIOR CENTER ASSOCIATION**

**1976 TO 1996**

**COMPILED BY  
EILEEN TURNBULL**

# HISTORY OF d'ESTERRE HOUSE SENIOR CENTER

## PART 1 1975 to 1986

The Town of Comox is located 3 miles east of the City of Courtenay and the Island Highway on the northern shore of the Comox Harbour and only a short drive from the Canadian Forces Base.

The equitable climate and the easy access to sailing, fishing, golf, skiing, and excellent recreation facilities in the district make the Comox Valley a very desirable place for retirement.

The centennial project for the Town of Comox in 1967 was a recreation building on Noel Avenue, and in 1971 a playing field in the adjacent Park.

In 1974 a delegation of Senior Citizens visited Mayor Dick Merrick and pointed out that while there were many recreation programs for the young, the growing population of Seniors was being neglected. Following the meeting, Mrs. Beatrice Radford (Trot), a member of the Comox Recreation Commission, was asked to organize the Seniors.

### SOCIAL CLUB

The same year Trot.Radford got together a group of Seniors and they met once a week in the Comox Centennial Recreation Center on Noel Avenue to do handicrafts, play cards, and enjoy conversation and a cup of tea. It was not long before some of the more active members of the group decided to try their hand at carpet bowling. Carpets and balls were obtained and the Senior Bowling Club got their start.

So if you are lonely, miserable, sad  
Just come to d'Esterre, we're sure  
you'll be glad.

This month is our birthday, we'll  
have a good "Do".  
And celebrate this event with friends  
Old and new.

But we must remember those who in the past  
Worked ever so hard, so our good name  
would last.

So let us ensure that folk everywhere  
Know we're so proud of the name of  
d'Esterre.

This poem was written by one of our members,  
Norman Chandler, to celebrate one of our birthdays.

## A PLACE OF THEIR OWN

It soon became apparent that mixing young and old in such a small building was not at all satisfactory and the Seniors began talking about a place of their own. About this time, Bert Linder joined the staff of the Town of Comox as Recreation Director and he suggested the Seniors apply for a New Horizons Grant.

On July 16, 1974, a letter was sent to the Department of Health and Welfare requesting information about making application for a grant. A reply was received on July 23, 1974 from Mr. James McConnell, Regional Representative, informing them that the first step was to form a New Horizons Committee of ten Seniors and then he would meet with the Committee in Comox.

### THE FOLLOWING SENIORS AGREED TO SERVE ON THE COMMITTEE

Erica Aubry.....	President
Jean Lust.....	Vice-President
Dorothy McKerrall.....	Secretary
Mary Humphrey.....	Treasurer
Elmer Legg	Ted Rosebloom
Peter McKerrall	Grace Bramham
Edith Mawer	Charles Tudway

With the assistance of Mr. McConnell and Bert Linder, a list of items considered necessary to furnish a building was drawn up with the estimated cost, and an application forwarded to New Horizons for \$14,240.

### WHAT IS THE NEW HORIZONS PROGRAM?

The New Horizons is a program developed by the Department of Health and Welfare to encourage and enable retired Canadians to become more actively involved in the life of their community.

This objective is accomplished through the distribution of cash grants to groups of elderly people to provide them with the finances and the opportunity to share their interests, skills and talents in developing and carrying out projects of their own choosing. A New Horizons group may apply twice for funds. These funds cannot be used for the construction of a new building, but are available for furnishings, equipment, and renovations of an existing building.

#### A NOTE FROM THE NEW HORIZONS MANUAL OCTOBER 13, 1976

It is expected that after the second grant, worthwhile projects will be supported by their own revenues or by the Community resources. The grants can provide the money to set the project in motion, but it is through the groups' own efforts that the activity will succeed.

#### EXCERPTS FROM A COURTENAY PAPER THE STAR - SEPTEMBER 7, 1974

"The proposal for the Senior Center Recreation Complex was outlined before Council last week by Mrs. Erica Aubry and Mrs. Dorothy McKerrall. The \$64,000 scheme involved an addition to the lower half of d'Esterre Clubhouse across from the Town Hall. Although Senior Citizens are presently meeting at the Recreation Center on Noel Avenue a few hours a week, the arrangement is not working out very well, according to Mrs. McKerrall, because of intrusion on youth programs. Dissatisfaction arises because of uncomplimentary remarks made by young people and the vandalism of dishes and furniture.

Money for construction work could be raised locally, offered Mayor Dick Merrick, while Clubhouse furnishings and renovations could be financed by the New Horizons program. He suggested that a service group might show interest in the project. The Mayor further pointed out the tendency to neglect the elderly while catering to the young people. Many Senior Citizens would welcome a Center of their own, he said, and estimated that 1,000 people could benefit from the proposed complex. Mrs. Aubry noted that the Town has grown as a retirement area and needed a meeting

#### d'ESTERRE

There's a Town in BC known as Comox  
On the edge of the shimmering sea.  
There's a house called d'Esterre  
Where the Seniors all go  
For muffins and a nice cup of tea.

It opens at eight in the morning  
For the Men to put the world right,  
If we did what they said that we ought to,  
We would be in a terrible plight.

We have woodwork, painting and singing,  
Bridge, dancing and pool  
Exercises, bowling and cribbage  
Fun band, whist, sew and tell,  
Of course there are one or two others  
To make the time go by fast,  
Like looking at movies, playing bingo  
Or working with Rock and with Glass.

A Committee of people elected each year,  
Look after us all with love and with care.  
There's Eileen and Bunny, there's June  
and there's Lil, Dorothy, Hylda, Alan  
and Bill, Marion, Eva, Agnes and Jan.  
Of course, to avoid someone making a fuss,  
We'll have to remember to mention our Russ.

## d'ESTERRE HOUSE PRESIDENTS, 1976 to 1996

Bill Gaze*	1976	Fred Osborne*	1988
Beatrice Radford*	1977	Marion Knisely	1988
Les Wilderspin*	1978	Marion Knisely	1989
Eileen Turnbull	1979		1990
Robert Sutheland*	1980	Russ Hammond	1991 - 1992
Eileen Turnbull	1981	Lil Linder	1993
Cliff Johnson	1982	Alan Edwards	1994 - 1995
Russ Hammond	1983 - 1986	Ray Scott	1996
Bert Linder	1987		

## LIFE MEMBERS

Fran & Morgan Shepherd  
 George Hadley\*  
 Edith Mawer  
 Jean Lust  
 Beatrice Radford\*  
 Erica Aubry (Gaze)\*  
 Eileen Turnbull  
 Jean Olson  
 Artel Ove  
 Cora Wilderspin  
 Bessie Lichty  
 George & Hylda Conrad  
 Ernie Gibson  
 Fred Oklovick

( \* Deceased )

facility which an elerly group might enjoy on a regular basis.

The Council agreed to the concept of a Senior Center but were not in favour of extending d'Esterre Clubhouse as among other reasons it would interfere with the community plan.

## HOW THE PROPERTY CAME BY ITS NAME

Mr. d'Esterre (affectionately known as Dusty) died early in the 1970's and in his will he left two-fifths of his valuable waterfront property to the Town of Comox and the other three-fifths to two friends. The property could not be easily subdivided and as the Council had recently completed a Marina at the foot of the property they negotiated to purchase the balance of the property in order to develop a Marina Park.

There were two buildings, one an old frame house which was eventually torn down. It was too costly to bring it up to present day standards and to meet the requirements of the Fire Marshal and the Building Inspector. The other building is still standing and is known as "Dusty's Den".

During his lifetime, Mr. d'Esterre used this building to exhibit the many things he had collected from his travels around the world. It is now used as a meeting place for small groups and rented out to various organizations.

## SECOND DELEGATION TO COUNCIL

In 1975, Eileen Turnbull was elected to Council as an Alderman and the Mayor appointed her as liason between the Council and the Seniors with a new Senior Center in mind.

The New Horizons grant in the amount of \$14,240.00 was approved. They now had the money to furnish the building, but had no building. Erica Aubry, Jean Lust and Dorothy McKerrall again presented a brief to the Council. They particularly requested that the d'Esterre Marina Park be the site for a new Senior Center, as it was the best location, and they had made application for a tax exemption number under the name of "The d'Esterre Marina Park Senior Center"

At a regular meeting of the Council on Monday, April 7, 1975 it was moved by Ald. Turnbull, seconded by Ald. Ellis that Council agree to proceed with the construction of a Social Center for the Senior Citizens. This motion was passed. (Extract from Council minutes).

At a special meeting of the Council, Wednesday, April 9, 1975, Ald. Turnbull outlined the activities planned by the Senior Citizens in aid of the proposed Senior Center which had been presented to the members at a meeting attended by Ald. Turnbull April 8, 1975. Discussion followed concerning siting of the proposed building. Council recommended that the building be situated adjacent to the East side of d'Esterre Clubhouse and that it front on Beaufort Avenue. Council also recommended that Mr. D. Spearing of Schultz and Spearing Associated Architects and Planners be approached with a request that he draw up a site plan and sketch of the proposed Center at a cost not to exceed \$1,500. (Extract from Minutes of Special Meeting).

#### BUILDING COMMITTEE

The Mayor appointed a building committee consisting of Ald. Turnbull (Town of Comox), Erica Aubry (New Horizons), and Archie Dick (Comox Rotary Club). The Seniors submitted a plan of what they required as top priority for a Senior Center. A room 53.6' x 54' for carpet bowling, a lounge, kitchen and washrooms. An architect was engaged to draw up a sketch plan and a site plan for the proposed building.

#### NEWS ITEM FROM THE COMOX DISTRICT FREE PRESS, APRIL 23, 1975 "COMOX SENIOR CENTER DEBATED"

A new Senior Center at Comox will be situated east of the d'Esterre Clubhouse, Comox Council decided at their meeting Monday night. Ald. Coleman spoke against building the Senior Citizens a place of their own, stating that their Social Center should be tied in with the other

#### FINAL WORD

In 1986 I wrote a brief history of the first ten years of d'Esterre House Senior Center Association, and in 1994 a brief summary of the growth during the next few years commemorating the official opening of the renovations of the lounges and kitchen.

I am now endeavouring to combine these two booklets and to bring the continued activities up to date, so if you find some repetition please forgive me.

We are justly proud of the Center and what it has accomplished in the last 20 years. This has only been done through the hard work and cooperation of many.

Many of our original members and Founders of d'Esterre House Senior Center are no longer with us. Let us not forget that their perseverance and hard work resulted in our Senior Center being built on this site where we have a beautiful view of Comox Bay and the Marina.

It is largely due to them and the sound investments that were made when interest rates were high that we were able to proceed with our recent renovations.

They left behind them a great legacy.

*Eileen Turnbull*

## RENTALS

The Association has invested a great deal of money in the renovations and new furniture and equipment. They were very concerned over the rentals for which they had no control. Up to this time the rentals had been under the control of the Recreation Department of the Town of Comox.

A Committee of the Seniors met with the Council, presented a brief, and requested that they be responsible for the rentals.

After a number of meetings with the Council, an agreement was signed for the d'Esterre House Senior Center Association to take over the rentals and some of the operating costs on a one year trial basis.

This agreement with the Town was signed in September 1994 and renewed in September 1995 at the request of the Association.

### "WE STILL NEED MORE ROOM!"

The paint had hardly dried when we heard loud and clear "We Need More Room!" After lengthy deliberations, the Board decided that an extra room could be added by closing in the downstairs below the upstairs balcony. They received the approval of the Council and this work was completed and there was another very attractive room.

As long as Comox continues to grow and Seniors find their way to d'Esterre House, we will always need more room. Let us pause and consider how lucky we are to have such a facility.

recreation facilities already available. "I'm all in favour of the Seniors having their own room, but I believe it would be wise to take a second look before we charge off in this direction".

Ald. Coleman added that he believed that the Legion would be offering the Senior Citizens a room for their use in the Legion Hall. Bob Driscoll, President of the Legion, said the room would hold about 15 people and is situated on the second floor, facing the waterfront. Entrance can be from Comox Avenue or the back parking lot. Driscoll added the "kitchen facilities would be available".

The motion appointing the architect and deciding on the location was passed with Ald. Coleman voting against it.

The firm has had experience in designing recreation facilities and they did some of the Senior Citizens Housing project in Cumberland. Ald. Coleman also said that "if the Architects are to site and design the building then the motion should not definitely state where the building is to be sited".

Ald. Turnbull pointed out that the Architects have already inspected the site and agreed with the position of the Center, which is east of the d'Esterre Clubhouse and fronting on Beaufort Avenue.

### HOW IS THE BUILDING TO BE FINANCED?

The next question was how the building was to be financed. The Seniors were told by the Council, that if they could raise \$60,000 in non-interest debentures, the Council would commit \$60,000 to the project and would also make application to the Department of Recreation and Conservation for a grant to cover 1/3 of the cost under the Community Recreation Facilities Fund Act. The Architects came up with an estimated cost of \$164,000 for a building which met the requirements of the Seniors.

The non-interest bearing debentures were to be paid by the Town at \$12,000 a year for five years. The contribution made by the purchasers was the loss of interest on the invested money. Many of the Seniors invested in the project

themselves, and they also canvassed the district. They reached their goal of \$60,000 after doing a big selling job.

Mayor Dick Merrick, who was a strong supporter of the Senior Center and also a member of the Comox Rotary Club, suggested that this would be a good project for the Comox Rotarians, which was a very new club at the time. The Rotary agreed to contribute \$15,000 cash and act as contractors for the project.

The Provincial Government approved the application for a grant in the amount of \$55,775, and in December 1975 the sod was turned by Erica Aubry, President of the New Horizons group and Archie Dick, President of the Comox Rotary Club.

### CONSTRUCTION OF SENIOR CENTER

The Construction of the new Senior Center got underway early in 1976. Eileen Turnbull had completed her term on the Council, and Ald. George Piercy was appointed to represent the Council on the building committee. Dennis Newman was appointed by the Comox Rotary Club (the contractors for the project) to act as Supervisor, and Morgan Shepherd was employed as foreman. The Rotary Club organized volunteer work parties, arranged for the purchase of materials, and the Seniors and students from Robb Road School also worked on the project.

Morgan Shepherd persuaded the Council that there should be a basement rather than a crawl space because of the contour of the land. This resulted in a \$30,000 overrun which the Council agreed to underwrite. As the Mayor said, "We got more building than we planned." A downstairs lounge, washrooms, furnace room and Ceramic Room were completed. The balance of the basement was left unfinished although a small area was screened off temporarily as a carpenter shop. In the meantime, the New Horizons group were very busy looking for bargains and purchasing drapes, carpets and furnishings for the new building. The Seniors interested in Ceramics work decided not to wait for the new building, but set up shop downstairs in Dusty's Den under the leadership of Jean Lust.

### VOLUNTEERS

Mention should be made at this time of the members of our Association who gave many hours of their time and expertise doing the preparatory work before construction could begin, and the painting and other small jobs which were necessary to complete the renovations which resulted in more space for us to carry on our activities.

### OFFICIAL OPENING

June 24, 1994 was the official opening of the enlarged kitchen and lounges. The 18th birthday of d'Esterre House was celebrated in this way. The first official opening was on June 25, 1976.

### MEETING ROOM

The next problem for the Board of Directors was to spruce up the meeting room. The Council agreed to replace the ceiling tiles and re-surface the floor.

The association looked after washing down the walls and money was found in the budget to purchase new drapes. This gave the room a complete new look.

### GAMES ROOM

With the expansion of the downstairs, it was decided that a regulation sized Pool Table which could be in the games room, would be purchased. There are now two Pool Tables, a shuffleboard and equipment to play Table Tennis.

Before the new Pool Table was installed, a post had to be relocated and new carpet laid. This has made a very pleasant room for Seniors to meet over a friendly game.

## RENOVATIONS

With the growing and active membership it became apparent that we needed more space to carry out our activities. The Town of Comox, Owners of the building, agreed to the expansion but stated that there were no funds available to assist with the project.

After many round table discussions as how best to provide more space with our limited budget, the consensus of opinion was that we should take in the upstairs balcony as part of the lounge, increase the downstairs lounge by the same amount, and expand the kitchen to take in the present office.

Plans were finally drawn up and after many delays, were approved by the Town of Comox. The Town wanted a new balcony and agreed to pay for that. The rest of the money was the responsibility of the Association.

The Comox Rotary Club agreed to take on this project, and would oversee the work and provide some funding and labour. The Association had built up a nice balance in the building fund, and that, together with some investments which had matured, would enable us to go ahead with the construction which started in September 1993. We now have more room to better serve our membership.

## NEW HORIZONS AND SENIOR LOTTERY FUNDS

With the expansion of the kitchen and lounge, it was necessary for us to look for funding for new equipment in the kitchen, to replace furniture which showed signs of wear and tear, and new drapes for the lounge.

A New Horizons Committee was formed and an application was made for a grant. Our application was approved in the amount of nearly \$16,000.

The other source of funding was the Senior's Lottery Fund, and we received a grant from them of \$11,000. These approvals are indicative that d'Esterre House is filling the role in the Community for which it was established many years ago.

November 1974

To Comox District Free Press

Dear Sir:

As the controversial issues regarding the building of a Senior Social Center for Senior Citizens in Comox has received considerable publicity in the local press and now in the Victoria Colonist under the caption of "Little Old Ladies Win Senior Battle", it would be much appreciated if you could find room for the other side of the question:

### THE LITTLE OLD LADIES OF COMOX

So we "Little Old Ladies" quotes Vic. Colonist  
Succeeded in getting our "Tea Room" at last  
The "Little Old Ladies" set out way last June  
To get their own "Club Room" and we hope  
twill be soon.

It happens that we don't consider the years  
For membership includes those of more tender years.  
From fifty - retired are welcome to join and help  
To smooth greatly the years in decline.

And what about men? Don't they ever grow old?  
There's bowling and woodwork and activities untold.

We have a committee of women and men  
Who are in command of the management end.  
The Executive, though is made up of four dames  
Who seek all the bargains and pay for the same.

The "middle" and "old" will much better blend  
Than the "old" and the "youth" who oft set us on end.  
Who better deserves a choice spot to view  
Than those that for years have paid taxes and dues.

And those who are nearing the end of the line  
 Will relish the sight from the lounge you will find.  
 Their movements are slower but we'll be there to see  
 That they will enjoy "THAT SPOT OF BREWED TEA."

Our Rotary Club are right there on the spot  
 To get started the work in the lovely Park lot.  
 The Soropotomists too have aided the fund  
 That must be built up to get things on the hum.

We moved too fast for the powers that be  
 Partly furnished the place with no building to see.  
 We're now raising funds with garage sales and teas  
 And donations from friends who see things as we see.

The furniture was purchased thanks to Mr. Trudeau  
 For the grants from New Horizons on us he did bestow.

One of the "Little Old Ladies"

This was written by one of our Founding Members. She passed away some time ago. She spent her final days in the Glacier View Lodge.

## LOCAL BUS SERVICE

At one time, we had a local bus service which was operated by a Volunteer driver to take Seniors shopping in Courtenay. This was discontinued when BC Transit put in a regular bus service.

## CARPENTER SHOP

There is a carpenter shop which is available for the use of members during the hours the Center is open.

## BUILDING FUND

As early as 1991 we could see the need for the expansion of the building, and a building fund was started. From time to time money was added to this fund through garage sales, bazaars, pancake breakfasts, pie sales, home cooking sales, and open houses, profits from our own Social events catered by our own Catering committee, and donations from individuals and Activity groups. By 1993 we could see our way to start with renovations.

## CRAFT SHOP

In 1991, a craft shop was opened up, the primary purpose being to provide an outlet for the crafts made by the members. A percentage of the sales go to the building fund, and the balance to the members to help pay for the materials used in their crafts. Once again, participation is emphasized.

## NEWSLETTER

A newsletter is published once a month to keep members informed as to the various events and to notify members of upcoming meetings and decisions made by the Board of Directors and the membership at their monthly meetings.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO AT d'ESTERRE HOUSE

Among the activities now being offered are Carpet Bowling, Bridge, Bingo, Ceramics, Cribbage, Exercises, Fun Band, Health and Harmony Group, Lapidary and Stained Glass, Movies, Painting Group, Pool, Social Club, Table Tennis and Whist, or you can just drop in for lunch or a cup of tea.

There are many social events. A few of these are Hawaiian Night, Western Night, Bobby Burns and St. Patrick's Day, as well as the traditional Christmas Dinner and New Years' Eve. The first Armistice Day Lunch was held in 1994 and proved to be a great success. It has become an annual event.

Birthday Parties, which were discontinued in 1982, have been reinstated by popular request. They are held once a month. Our own Fun Band and the Harmony Group are always willing to entertain us with music and song. Both these groups travel around to the Care Facilities in the area and have been invited to perform at Glacier View Lodge, Cumberland Intermediate Care, Laurel Lodge and St. Joseph's Hospital Extended Care.

We must not forget our Mens' Club, which meets every weekday morning at 8am, and over a cup of coffee settles all the world's problems.

We have fashion shows, over 80's Teas and once a year a Newcomers Tea.

There is a travel committee who have arranged short bus trips. We have been to the West Coast, Vancouver's Granville Street Market, Powell River, Quadra Island, and Chemainus Theatre, to name a few. These trips are always popular and filled to capacity.

Programs are flexible and may change from time to time, but there is always something doing at d'Esterre.

## COPY OF MINUTES, NEW HORIZONS EXECUTIVE, APRIL 15, 1976

Meeting of the Executive, Dr. Piercy, Bert Linder. Dr. Piercy in the Chair.

It was ratified that the \$2,012 from the boat sale and the \$825.65 was a contribution to the Town funds (building) (\$825.65 rummage sale).

Main discussion was about rental of the Hall.

1. The Town will handle the rentals.
2. Costs expected to be \$100 per week.
3. Rates regulated by Town.
4. Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays for Seniors.
5. Any of the above may be changed by mutual agreement (Seniors having priority).
6. Rentals supplied with caretaking.
7. Lower section not for rent.

Opening of the building tentatively set for June 25, 1976. VIP's and Deben-ture buyers to receive invitations.

New Executive to be elected on a specific date first week in June.

When Nominating:

- \* Willingness to accept nomination.
- \* Qualifications and experience.
- \* Interest in the project.
- \* Time to devote to the project.

Meeting adjourned.

## OFFICIAL OPENING

The official opening was delayed to the 25th of June, 1975. This was a big day for the Seniors and their Center was officially opened by the Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Walter Owen. It was a community effort and a dream come true.

## AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TOWN OF COMOX AND SENIOR CITIZENS

July 23, 1976 - An agreement was made between the Town of Comox and the Comox Senior Citizens Club regarding the d'Esterre House, Beaufort Avenue, Comox, as follows:

1. It is agreed that the Town of Comox owns the building.
2. The use of the building will be programmed by the Recreation Director in conjunction with the Recreation Commission and Council and the Senior Citizens Club.
3. It is agreed that the building is constructed primarily for use by the Senior Citizens of the Town of Comox and surrounding area.
4. The Upper section of the building to be available for rent to responsible groups at certain times and dates which will be at the discretion of the Recreation Director after consultation with Senior Citizens Executive.
5. Monies received from the rental building will be used to defray costs of operation.
6. Adequate insurance coverage for building and contents will be paid for by the Town.
7. On special occasions, the Town reserves the right to use the building after adequate notice has been given to the Senior Citizens Executive.

Signed by Erica Aubry  
Senior Citizens

Mayor Dick Merrick  
Town of Comox

R. G. Kew  
Town of Comox

## PART 2 THE NEXT TEN YEARS 1986 to 1996

June 25, 1996 - d'Esterre House Senior Center Association will be celebrating it's 20th birthday.

The Comox Valley has experienced an unprecedented growth due to its moderate climate and recreational opportunities. Seniors have moved to the Valley to be near their family, and others have chosen to make their home here upon retirement.

It is not long before many of them find their way to d'Esterre House where they make new friends and participate in the activities of the Association. We think that we are somewhat unique that we now offer in the neighbourhood of 20 activities on a regular basis. So there is something for everyone. This has been accomplished by members volunteering their time to act as hostesses, serve lunches, organize and run the various programs. WE HAVE NO PAID EMPLOYEES. Participation is the name of the game.

The Board of Directors which is elected each year oversees the general administration of the Association. There is a general meeting once a month to hear the report of the Directors and to give members an opportunity to express their concerns or approve the agenda.

Members are encouraged to attend the meetings, participate in the activities, and to become an active part of the Association.

There were also some short trips such as a visit to Yuculta Lodge, Campbell River, and Quadra Island. The Association has been fortunate in having qualified volunteers continue with the bus to Courtenay and even take some of us on short trips after Joe, the founder of the bus trips, left the District.

### RENOVATIONS TO THE STORAGE AND PORCH

It became necessary to close in the Porch on the East side of d'Esterre House. This served two purposes. It would provide extra storage and would prevent the rain coming in and causing damage to the building every time there is a south-east wind and rain. Morgan Shepherd again helped out by acting as volunteer foreman for the job. The Association agreed to donate \$1,000 to the project, and some volunteer labour. The Town would also make a contribution. This work was completed and there were two storage rooms instead of one.

### NEW HORIZONS GRANT AND FUN BAND

Our Center was started with a New Horizons grant and as we come to the end of our tenth year of operation, another New Horizons Committee was formed by some of the members and they received a grant to purchase instruments to start a fun band. This band is very busy practicing and will provide music at some of our social events.

### THE FIRST TEN YEARS

The first ten years have been busy years, and we have accomplished much. A firm foundation has been laid for the continued growth and success of the d'Esterre House Senior Center Association.

The d'Esterre House has been a great asset to the Community and a tribute to those who had the foresight to proceed with construction.

### LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

From time to time, Life Memberships have been presented to members who have rendered outstanding service to the Association.

### THE FIRST YEARS

A meeting was held on July 27, 1976 and it was decided that the annual meeting would be held in September, and a new slate of officers would be elected at that time. In the meantime, the executive of the New Horizons Committee would carry on. Gerda Davis volunteered to be in charge of the kitchen and a committee was formed to provide hostesses to be on duty each day. In the early days, hostesses usually worked in pairs from 10am to 4pm, but as the membership grew, this was reduced to half day shifts.

The New Horizons Committee made application to the New Horizons program for a second grant in the amount of \$7,990. The grant was received in August, 1976.

The first annual meeting was held in d'Esterre House on September 15, 1976. The first executives elected were Bill Gaze, President; Beatrice Radford (Trot), Vice-President; George King, Secretary; and Eileen Turnbull, Treasurer. In addition, each activity was to have one representative attend executive meetings.

Some of the early activities which are still going strong, thanks to the Volunteer Coordinators, are carpet bowling, ceramics, social club, whist, cribbage, bingo, and the men's Club. These were followed by the Rock and Gem Club (Lapidary), Saturday night socials, and film night where Bill Gaze showed interesting films.

Gerda Davis volunteered to arrange monthly birthday parties and the first of these was held on October 30, 1976. There have been program changes as time and circumstances dictated, and the birthday parties were discontinued in 1983, along with the Saturday night socials and the film nights. The Exercise group, pot lock suppers, special lunches and our own fun band have all proved very popular additions.

The first Christmas dinner was held after Christmas on January 8, 1977 and was a smorgasbord with everyone contributing. There were 135 members present.

Gerda Davis resigned from the kitchen duties and Em. Aggett volunteered to look after the kitchen. After the first year, she asked to be relieved of the purchasing, and for the next six years, Ann and Jack Huxham did an excellent job in this department.

### FUND RAISING AND SPECIAL EVENTS

The first spring bazaar was held on March 26, 1977 and \$1,392.27 was raised for d'Esterre House. In November of the same year, Ceramics organized a handicraft show and sale with all members of the Association participating. The emphasis was placed on the craft show. This proved very successful and many beautiful articles made by Seniors were on display. 10% commission on sales was turned over to d'Esterre House. There have been a number of other fundraising events over the years including the mens' auction, special teas and bazaars. The money raised from these events made it possible for the Association to contribute towards the completion of the Center and some necessary alterations.

We have entertained and been entertained. A few of the highlights of entertainment have been two visits from the Hollyburn Harmonizers from Vancouver, a local ballet group under the direction of Mrs. Hylda Smith, a puppet show from Campbell River, Vernon Senior Citizens choir and the Melody Makers from Campbell River. Many local groups and individuals also have been very generous with their time and talents.

We have entertained glacier View Lodge residents, Cumberland Intermediate Care and Extended Care. Cumberland and Powell River Seniors and the Evergreen Choir from Courtenay to name a few. In addition, the Carpet Bowlers Club have inter-Club competitions and regularly entertain Carpet Bowlers from out of town.

### COMPLETION OF DOWNSTAIRS

It was not long before the workshop proved inadequate, and a health and fire hazard. An agreement was reached between the Town of Comox and the Seniors that they jointly share in the cost of finishing the downstairs and relocating

the workshop. A Lapidary room was included in the plans. The Seniors agreed to contribute \$2,079.84 and labour for the project. The New Horizons Committee would use the balance of their grant for tiling the ceiling, carpeting the floor and a gate to the Ceramic room at a cost of \$2,100. The total cost was \$6,379.84 and the Town of Comox paid the balance. Nine of our men contributed 577 hours. Morgan Shepherd acted as foreman and put in many hours planning purchasing and acting as liason with the Town. The result was a very attractive games room, a good workshop and a place for the Rock & Gem Club to use their equipment.

### INCORPORATION AS A SOCIETY, JANUARY 3, 1978

It soon became apparent the the Association required a Constitution and Bylaws, and that if at some future time they wished to apply for grants, it would be necessary to be registered as a Non-Profit Society. These documents were completed during the year 1977 and were approved by the Registrar of Companies. The d'Esterre House Senior Center Association received the Certificate of Incorporation dated January 3, 1978. The interim Board of Directors were Bill Gaze, Beatrice Radford, Len Brett, Eleanor Crosby and Eileen Turnbull.

### NEWSLETTER

The first newsletter was published in October 1976, with Eileen Turnbull as pro tem Editor to get the paper started. As there were no volunteers, Les Wilderspin offered to help and Eileen and Les were co-editors until Hylda Conrad took over the task. She was followed by Howard Clegg and Mabel Braathen.

### BUS SERVICE

In May 1978 Joe Krywolt volunteered to drive a bus into Courtenay once a week in order that the Seniors without transportation could go in and do their shopping, etc. Arrangements were made with Robb Rd. School for the use of their bus on Thursday mornings.

Joe also took some of the Seniors on a number of trips by bus. These included a trip to the King Tut Exhibition in Seattle, an overnight trip to Victoria, a trip to Reno and a weekend at Harrison.