

ON THE TRAIL AGAIN!

The Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society will, once again, be taking part in the North Saanich Flavour Trail on **Sunday, August 26.**

We will be conducting **guided tours of the Park at 10:30am, 12:30 and 2:30pm.** The tours will begin at the Kiosk on East Saanich Road. Look for the balloons. The Park has a unique history and is filled with interesting and rare trees and shrubs

At the end of the tour, join the board members and volunteers for High Tea, c.1912, at the picnic shelter, formerly a BC Electric Railway Station, learn more about our Ravine project and take a chance on winning one of the historic and rare recently propagated shrubs. Stroll through the less visited areas of the Park to enjoy the spectacular views.



Staff Picnic, early 1930's

Tell your friends about our Tour and Tea and join us as we celebrate our Centenary year and proudly show off the accomplishments of our volunteers.

The Park used to be a rail stop for travelers

The British Columbia Electric Company, who run the streetcar system in Victoria since 1890 and was now (1911) constructing its interurban line up the Saanich Peninsula, offered the site to the Federal Government for experimental farm purposes. It was one of three railroads to the Peninsula and ran through the middle of the Farm property. The current site was purchased by the Government in February, 1911. Records show that in 1919 over 3000 people visited the Park. However, as automobiles became more popular, rider ship on the railway declined and on October 24, 1924, the Peninsula portion of the BC Electric Railway ceased to exist.

They did, however, leave their station which then became the Dominion Experimental Farm's picnic shelter. It is much the same as when built during the first years of the BC Electric Railway and named 'Saanichton Station'.



*"Saanichton Station" now a picnic shelter in the park.
photos courtesy Sidney Archives*

For more information:

http://www.northsaanich.ca/Municipal_Hall/Departments/Planning_and_Community_Services/Planning/North_Saanich_Agriculture/2012_Flavour_Trail.htm

LOSS AND GAIN

We have lost our magnificent native Dogwood (*Cornus Nuttallii*) situated on the slope near the old water tanks due to disease. It had been in decline for several years and we made an effort to save it by having a root injection but in vain. Our records show it was a natural seedling and noted in the 1930s. The Sidney Archives has several black and white photos dating from 1930 and 1950. The photo shown here was taken by Stu and Joan MacDonald (super volunteers) of their dogs, Blyss and Broker, in 2006. The MacDonalds have generously donated a new tree (*Prunus s. Shirofugen*) for the site.

While losing plant material is a constant in a Park of this age, we have already acquired replacements. Don Whittle, a long time 'Friend', has propagated some of our oldest and most rare specimens. The rhodos, *Onsloweanum*, *Sir William Gladstone* and *Alexander Adie* are from the early 1913 shipments from France; *Illicium religiosum* from Japan (1913); the rare *Azaleodendron*, *Martha Isaacson*; *Viburnum Juddii* and an unnamed rhodo with a glorious blue/red bloom. He has also generously donated a *Cornus Capitata* and a spectacular *R. Basilicum*. This group of 30+ plants will be located around the Park but the majority are destined for the Ravine.



Thank you, Don Whittle, for your generous giving of time and talent to enhance our Park.

CELEBRATE A CENTURY and ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We were pleased to have a full house for our Celebrate A Century event on April 18, 2012. Our Board, volunteers, Friends and invited guests were treated to a program of an historical view of the last 100 years of the Experimental Farm and Park with an audio visual show and a presentation by Carol Masters, Acting Director, Center for Plant Health, on the current work at the Center. There was also a large three panel photo exhibit on loan from the Sidney Museum covering the Experimental Farm from 1912 to 1980.

The AGM followed the Century program with the election of officers for 2012-13.

Chairperson	Ed Johnson
Vice Chairperson	Vacant
Treasurer	Owen Redfern
Secretary	Penny Boone
Directors	Freda Thorne Vernon Wiebe

We are in need of two more Directors and a Vice Chairperson. Restoration and renovation of Dominion Brook Park is a worthwhile endeavour which goes from strength to strength and will be enjoyed by all for years to come. Join the Team!

Coffee and goodies with a special birthday cake (donated by Jamie and Sherrill Cox) ended the evening.



John Dawson, founder of the Friends of Dominion Brook Park Society cutting our anniversary cake.



A large crowd of well-wishers attended our centennial and enjoyed the audio/visual presentations by Joan Gibb and Carol Masters.

SUMMER WORK PROGRAM

The main project for this summer is the renovation of the Pond area. It is a difficult site with steep slopes and muddy conditions.

Unfortunately, over the years, the brook has silted in which allowed luxuriant growth, some good, some bad, but it has changed the water course to the south side underneath our Wilson rhododendrons – among our most historic plants – which will impact them in a negative way.

We have begun removing the ‘bad’ growth with the volunteers working inside the fence on the east, south and north side of the Pond and North Saanich with their power tools removing the overgrown noxious plant material from the slope and newly appeared ‘delta’. The usual summer algae appeared but with an old fashioned method of rope and rake much has been removed from the water’s surface.

The next job is tackling the truly overgrown *Pinus mugo compacta*. A decision will be made to either keep and prune (if possible) or remove the pines. We will be planting, where necessary, with a new group of interesting specimens. We have the 1978 planting plan for the slope but will be going in another direction as most of the original plants have disappeared.

It is always satisfying for our volunteers to renovate another section of Park. And we appreciate those who thank us for a job well done.



Sorbaria sorbifolia ‘Sem’

(False Spiraea)

A deciduous, small perennial shrub (1-1.5 metres) in the Rosaceae family with a suckering habit which must be dealt with regularly but the fernlike leaves 6-12” long with up to 23 toothed, deep green leaflets make the work worthwhile. Stems topped in summer by branching clusters one foot long tiny, white flowers. These should be cut off after they have faded as it blooms on new wood. The plant has a lush, almost tropical look especially in rich, moist soil.

Look for it in the Island Bed closest to the Marshall Street entrance just behind the Park sign and next to the *Pinus sylvestris*.



Staff this issue:

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Joan Gibb

Ed Johnson

For more information on Dominion Brook Park, please visit <http://www.dominionbrookpark.ca/>
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