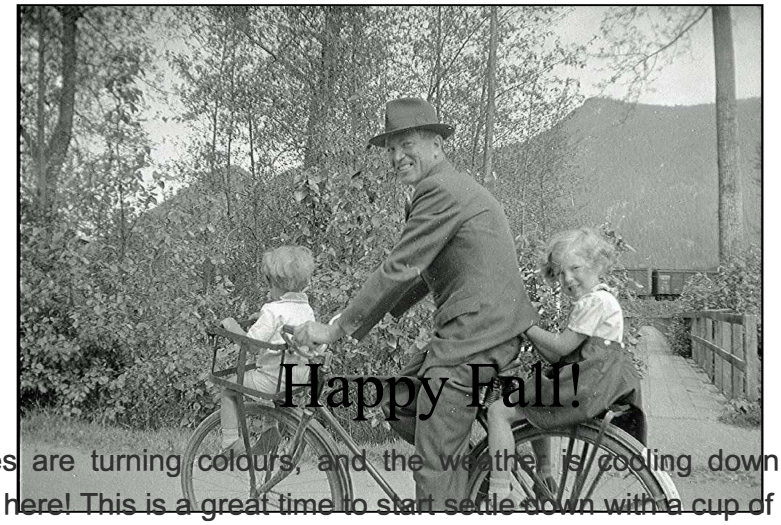
Saanich Archives Newsletter

| Fall 2026 |



Happy Fall!

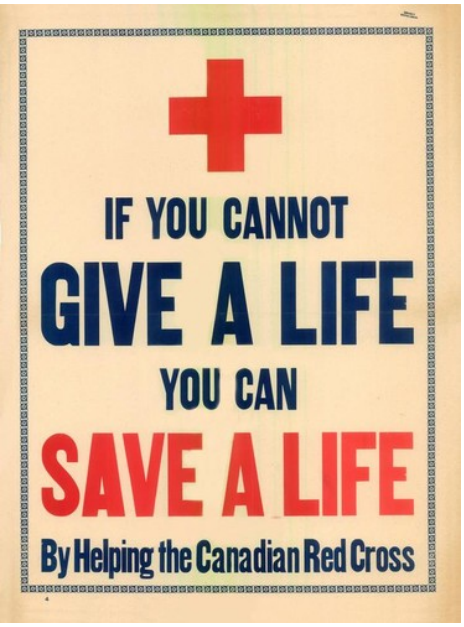
The leaves are turning colours, and the weather is cooling down - which means autumn is here! This is a great time to start settle down with a cup of something warm and dive into research projects - family, house, and local history all! To kickstart some of that interest, we hope you enjoy this season's newsletter.

Saanich Fair - Thank You!



Saanich Archives would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the organizers of the Saanich Fair and all of those who stopped by and interacted with our table this year! This was our second year in attendance, and we loved hearing all of your stories, questions, and excitement for our local history. We're already looking forward to next year, and hope to see you there!

Upcoming Exhibits



If You Can't Give a Life, Then Save a Life

Saanich Municipal Hall; October 21 - November 11, 2026

For Remembrance Day 2026, Saanich Archives honours local nurses, women, the Red Cross, and the popular canine celebrity – Muggins – for the roles they played in the World Wars. Between caring for the sick, serving their country, tending to the wounded, and raising money for all those affected by the war, learn about their efforts both in Saanich and abroad. We are proud to display Muggins' medals, introduce you to some of our nursing sisters, and show how members of our community rallied together to help fund aid for Canadian soldiers.

Archives Awareness Week: Access and Accessibility

Saanich Municipal Hall; November 12 - December 1, 2026

But that's not all! Please join us from November 12, 2026 to December 1, 2026 in celebrating this year's Archives Awareness Week. This year's theme is Access and Accessibility. Accessing archives involves a wide array of needs, opportunities and challenges – with each inquiry we receive offering a unique interaction with our collection. This exhibit, also in Municipal Hall, will highlight some of the ways people can access and engage with our collection, both in person or at home.





Historical Highlight: Joe Jones

Born on July 17, 1889 in Shropshire, England, Joseph William ‘Joe’ Jones arrived on Vancouver Island in 1912 with a talent for marksmanship and a childhood of estate gamekeeping under his belt. After wartime service and varied odd jobs, Joe found his true footing in Victoria. In 1921, he married his sweetheart, Clara Laura Orr, and put down money on a home at 35 Regina Avenue in Saanich. That same year, he donned the uniform of the British Columbia Game Department.

As warden Joe quickly proved indispensable. Drawing on English gamekeeping techniques, he was appointed to the Cedar Hill Game Farm on Glendenning Road, soon rising to superintendent. By 1925, Joe oversaw the establishment of the Elk Lake Game Farm, set across 30 acres of the old Rithet estate. There, Joe helped raise over 3,000 poults – young turkeys - a year, and the farm supplied game birds to the Fraser Valley, the Interior, and across Vancouver Island until the Depression shuttered the program in 1933.

Following the farm’s closure, Joe was handed sole patrol over an enormous territory: the Highlands, North and South Saanich, and the Gulf Islands. His days were anything but routine. On James Island, he corral-trapped runaway fallow deer by baiting them with cabbage. In the early 1940s, he built slat traps in the streams feeding Elk Lake, stripping half a million fish eggs in a single spring for the Sooke Hatchery. When poachers on Mayne Island and Sooke hid illegal venison up trees and beneath sandy crawlspaces disguised as "fish," Joe's sharp eyes caught them out. Above all, Joe was renowned for protecting local farmers from livestock-raiding predators, taking more than 50 cougars using his beloved cross-bred coonhounds.

Joe retired in 1954 at age 65, settling near his beloved Beaver Lake, at 4754 Elk Lake Drive. Well into his eighties, the warden remained a familiar local figure - tending his garden, selling homegrown raspberries to pay his taxes, and regularly

besting marksmen at the annual Christmas Turkey Shoot. Joe passed away in 1982, at the age of 92.

Buildings of the Past: North Dairy School and Oak Lodge Hospital



The North Dairy School (4036 Quadra) began its life in 1913 as a triangular piece of ground bordering on Kenneth and Quadra Street. It started as a two-room schoolhouse, with two additional rooms added to the front between 1914 and 1915. During the warm summer month of September, classes were held outside in a tent, and when weather cooled through the winter months, the rooms were warmed with wooden stoves. The privies could be found outside. In addition to its role in the community as a school, the building also played host to community teas and parties and was a voting site for local elections. During the First World War, fundraisers were held in its rooms, and following the War, military tournaments were held on its lawn.

Officially, the school closed its doors in 1938, primarily due to a lack of attendance as other schools opened up nearby. However, during the Second World War, the building was used as an annex for the Tolmie School, with children being bussed between the two sites.

By 1953, the school had become the Oak Lodge Hospital, a 39-bed facility that had a focus on the elderly in the community, with most of its patients being over the age of 70. The Hospital remained in operation until roughly 1970, by which the original

building was torn down. In its place, the Quadra Woods Apartments still stand to this day.



Saanich Votes!



Remember to get out and vote! This Saturday, October 17, 2026: find your nearest polling place and make sure your voice is heard. More information can be found here!

Saanich

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Questions? Contact us today archives@saanich