



Before texting and social media, the river was the place to be!



\$2

River walkways with charming views along the historic Thames River, manicured gardens and parks, heritage buildings, and local history unite on the **River Walk Heritage tour**. This interesting blend of architecture, personalities and natural beauty provides an ideal way to spend the day in Stratford.

**STRATFORD
ARTS**

**THE ARTS
ARE WHAT
WE ARE**

Stratford Tourism Alliance
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Grist for the mill, the heart of Stratford's beginnings grow close to its river. Desired by the railway, but saved for the people, the utilitarian was transformed to beauty for everyone to enjoy. From the strength of stone masons building North America's only double arched bridge still in use by auto travel today to the splendor of gardens dotted with plants named in the Bard's plays, our artistic salute to heroes and hospitality is recognized internationally. Heritage once washed away is proudly restored. Stratford's early life along the river is revealed as you stroll the **River Walk Heritage Tour.**

BEGIN THE TOUR AT THE YORK STREET VISITOR'S INFORMATION CENTRE LOCATED AT THE BASE OF YORK STREET AND VETERANS DRIVE. WALK TO YORK STREET AND TRAVEL WEST.

You are looking at The Mill Block, the oldest extant commercial block in Stratford. It was designed with the lay of the land with three stories at the front and four stories here along the back, originally reserved for deliveries and stables. Numbers Four & Six Ontario Street as well as Number 55 (along the front) were constructed during the 1850s, with the buildings in between replacing original structures during the 1880s and later. Built on a natural cliff exactly one storey below the back of the Mill Block is York Street. During the 1980s, York Street became a boutique area transforming the original delivery service entrance to what you see today.



1

The Perth County Court House – 1 Huron Street

Built in 1885-87 in the most commanding position of Stratford, this masterpiece of Queen Anne Revival Style was designed by London architect, George F. Durrand who also designed the Stratford Jail. Known to have the best display of terracotta in Canada it opened in 1887 on Queen Victoria's



Golden Jubilee. That was also the year that electricity first came to Stratford, and by way of celebration, electric lights in the Perth County Court House were turned on.

THE SHAKESPEAREAN GARDENS ARE LOCATED BESIDE THE COURT HOUSE.

Shakespearean Gardens

Opened in the 1930s, these gardens contain a sculpture of Shakespeare designed by Canadian, Cleve Home. Interestingly, this bust arrived in 1949, prior to the Stratford Festival. The gardens rest on the site of Duffon's Woollen Mill. All that remains of the building is the chimney, which is now a bird tower. The original roses were a gift from Queen Mary, who had also donated roses to the garden in Stratford-Upon-Avon in England.



2

THE HURON STREET BRIDGE IS TO YOUR RIGHT.



3

A North American Treasure

The only double-arched aqueduct road bridge in North America still in use by automotive traffic, the Huron Street Bridge was intended to be a triple arch, but the river was too narrow. It was built in 1885, the



year that Stratford officially became a city.

Too sexy for my statue?

At the time of its unveiling, Cleve Horne's youthful depiction of Shakespeare (located in the Shakespearean Gardens) with its flowing hair was thought scandalous by more than a few women of the local church auxiliaries. So much so, that many thought it should have been removed.

CROSS ONTARIO STREET AND TRAVEL ACROSS THE BRIDGE. IN FRONT OF THE LIONS POOL YOU WILL SEE THE DUTCH MEMORIAL.

Perth Regiment Gives Hitler the Boot

After the occupation of Holland by Nazi armies in WWII, seven hundred free men of Dutch birth used Stratford as a military training base. This memorial was a gift of appreciation from the Netherlands for Stratford's hospitality. The participation of the Perth Regiment in the liberation of Holland in 1945, adds to the close bond between our countries. The pair of hands symbolizes Canada's support; the dove is symbolic of the Netherlands. In 2017 a new plaque was placed by Princess Margaret.

LOOK TO THE FAR SIDE OF LION'S POOL.



CONTINUE UP MORNINGTON STREET TO ST. JAMES CHURCH.

Worst Flood In Stratford's History

This neoclassical Pergola is the second to be built on this site. The first was constructed in 1931, and was swept away when the Avon and Thames Rivers flooded not only Stratford but nearby St. Marys, Ingersoll and London. The floodgates failed to effectively deal with the overflowing river as a result of a severe rainfall.



A Royal Beauty

Built in 1870, St. James is the official church of the Crown and is the third church building on this site. The tower, added in 1905 is home to 11 bells, the largest nicknamed Big Joe, weighs 955 kilograms (2,100 pounds). God's Holy Acre, a cemetery used between 1844 and 1871 is located beside the church. The gravestones, including one of the Sargint family (owner of the Shakespeare Inn), have been laid flat to reduce deterioration.



CONTINUE EAST ON WILLIAM STREET TO WATERLOO STREET.

Roll out the blue carpet!

The sapphire blue carpet in front of St. James Church altar came from Westminster Abbey, England after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, in 1953.



Juno Award Winner Loreena McKennitt Saves Historical Building

In the mid 1800s Stratford named its city-wards relating to Shakespeare. The former Falstaff Public School was one of nine public schools in Stratford. In a generous act of historical preservation, acclaimed Stratford-based Celtic singer/composer Loreena McKennitt purchased the property in 2000. Since that time, more than one million dollars has been invested in the extensive renovation to convert the building into the Falstaff Family Centre.



If you look closely at the front entry to the Falstaff Family Centre, you can see the bust of Shakespeare's Falstaff looking out above the front doors.



8

Canada's Most Respected Classical Actor, William Hutt 4 Waterloo Street



Mr. Hutt joined the Stratford Shakespearean Festival during its inaugural season in 1953 and continued to tread the boards until 2005. Appearing in over 100 plays,

Hutt was the consummate actor playing both fools and kings, tragic as well as comic leads. He won every major theatre award in Canada, as well as a Governor General's Award for lifetime achievement, and was made a companion of the Order of Canada. William Hutt died at the age of 87 in 2007.

CROSS THE WILLIAM HUTT BRIDGE TO LAKESIDE DRIVE. TURN LEFT.

9 Tom Patterson Theatre 111 Lakeside Drive



In 1971, the Stratford Shakespeare Festival opened a new venue known as the Third Stage. It was renamed in 1991 in memory of its founder. In 2018 a 100-million-dollar campaign supports a new theatre and education facility designed by architect Siamak Hariri.

LOOK TO YOUR LEFT.

A first for the great one!



The William Allman arena is the site of Wayne Gretzky's first minor hockey goal in 1968.



10

The Grand Old Hockey Shrine 15 Morenz Drive



Built in 1924, The William Allman Memorial Arena, "a perfectly preserved relic of a bygone age" is touted as the longest continuously

operating arena of its kind in the world. It is one of the last remaining examples of the so called "Ice Palaces" built in North America during the 1920s and 30s, which took advantage of new technologies permitting the installation of indoor artificial ice surfaces. From Howie Morenz to Tim Taylor, over 30 NHL stars started their careers in the arena. In 2010 Hockey Day in Canada was hosted here.

CONTINUE ALONG LAKESIDE DRIVE AND CROSS AT THE WATERLOO STREET INTERSECTION. LAKESIDE DRIVE HAS NOW BECOME VETERANS DRIVE.

Boasting the **largest park land per capita** in Canada, Stratford's main park system contains approximately **115 acres of formal parkland** and nearly 60 acres of natural area.



11

Its Not Easy Going Green



R. Thomas Orr, was the driving force behind this city's parks system, including the Shakespearean Gardens. He led the controversial yet successful crusade to save the Avon riverfront and millpond from railway development,

overseeing the transformation of the industrial area into parkland. His legacy is maintained in the present day gardens that are routinely finalists in Canada's Communities in Bloom.

CONTINUING ALONG VETERANS DRIVE, YOU WILL SEE THE WAR MEMORIAL.

Right Versus Might Stratford War Memorial



12

Designed by Canada's most famous sculptor, W.S. Allward, the cenotaph is of national importance. The dramatic style was the precursor to the famed Vimy Ridge Memorial to World War I Canadian soldiers in France. His other works grace the Supreme Court in Ottawa. This work was completed in 1922 and features the classical theme of right versus might. The two cannons date from the 19th century. One, a captured Russian cannon from the Crimean War, the other from the War of 1812.

Images courtesy of:

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The St. Marys Museum, 177 Church St. South, St. Marys 519-284-3556
www.stmarysmuseum.ca

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