

# A WALKING TOUR of LISTOWEL



## Historical Points of Interest

Includes connection to North Perth Trails

North Perth

Ontario

West is built in two distinct styles. The larger east half is Italianate, and the smaller west half is rural Ontario design with a verandah. The stylish iron fence was added in recent times.

14. Trinity United Church. This was built as a Methodist Church in 1886 and lasted until 1940. That year a devastating fire destroyed the building in a matter of minutes; leaving only the side walls standing. The present church was rebuilt incorporating the original side walls. The church is known for its pipe organ, pleasing acoustics and large number of memorial stained glass windows.

15. Knox Presbyterian Church was built between 1883 and 1887 in the "Romanesque style with lofty towers and turrets", reflecting a strong Scottish influence. The design was by George F. Durand who also designed the Perth County Court House in Stratford. The building underwent restoration work in 1992, the Sunday School wing was added in 1993 and the tower and turrets were restored in 2000.

16. The large home at 385 Argyle Avenue North was originally owned by Murdoch MacGillivray, whose grandson Mac Pratt was a well known lawyer and former Mayor of Listowel. The house is built from soft red Wallace brick which requires painting for protection. For years flowering magnolia trees, rare to this area blossomed on the front lawn.

17. The former CNR / Grand Trunk rail station was purchased by the Listowel Kinsmen when rail service was abandoned. The renovated facility is used as a meeting hall, and hosts numerous community functions. You can also join the North Perth Trail from here.

18. The Maples. Originally built by J.C. Hay a local banker, the house was a full three stories high with a Mansard roof. A fire in 1922 damaged the upper level and a new roof was added in the "Queen Anne style". At one time a tennis court and croquet lawn were located on the west side.

19. 185 Binning Street West, "Rosebank", was built in 1872 by the Brook family, owners of the woolen mill. Originally the house was much larger, but the rear section was removed and the land sold. Note the glass sunroom on the east side.

20. The home at 145 Binning Street West was built in the 1880's for Dr. Bruce a dentist. He also had the house next door built, which became the Presbyterian Manse. A former owner was Morton Scott, a well known lawyer. He and his sister moved here after donating their Elizabeth street home to the town to be used for a hospital.

21. The Manse, at the corner of Wallace Avenue North and Binning Street West was purchased by the Presbyterian Church in 1910 from John Pletch.

## LISTOWEL WALKING TOUR:

A self guided experience to see and enjoy many points of interest located within the community. Historic homes, landmarks, architectural highlights, and peaceful public gardens combine to create a relaxing walk along tree lined streets.

1. The tour begins at the Listowel Branch of the North Perth Public Library. Built in 1907 with a \$10,000 Carnegie Grant it has served the community in many capacities; from town offices to a jail and soup kitchen, and it now houses the local Archives branch and an expanded library.

2. The Rotary Millennium Garden in front of the library creates an oasis of solitude amidst the hustle and bustle of the downtown core. A marble memorial to mark the Listowel Arena Disaster in 1959 is located here.

The tour proceeds in a westerly direction along Main Street to the Historic PUC Pumping Station and North Perth Trails connection **OR** in an easterly direction through the downtown business section to Listowel Memorial Park. Here you can enjoy a relaxing and peaceful time exploring the gardens, riverbank planting, foot bridge, playground and river fountain in the town's *best kept secret*.

3. Christ Church Anglican with its slate roof and Gothic influences including medieval appearance and narrow stained glass windows compliments the unique design of the original Carnegie Library building opposite it. The church was built in 1896.

4. The red brick house at 405 Main Street West is the former home of Francis Wellington Hay MPP and one time leader of the provincial Liberal Party. Mr Hay was elected to the provincial government in 1919. In 1921 he 'assumed' the leadership of the provincial Liberal party. He was defeated in 1923 election but was successful at being elected to the Federal parliament in 1926.

5. Once, 469 Main Street West was on the edge of town and operated as the Last Chance Hotel; last chance for a drink before leaving town. When Perth County voted 'dry' in the 1940's, the hotel closed and became a rooming house. Later yet, a retirement home. This is one of many local houses built of Wallace brick.

6. Livingstone Manor. This stately home was built in the 1880's as a home for John Livingstone, a Scottish born owner of several flax mills in Ontario. The home features locally produced Wallace brick, stone carvings from Scotland and marble work from Italy. Inside, the 12 foot high ceilings are decorated with painted details by Hungarian artist Karl Muller. Castle Kilbride in Baden was designed by the same architect. The building was home to the Livingstone family for three generations, then was converted to a funeral home in

22. The North Perth Municipal Building houses the administration offices, Police services, and the Listowel Volunteer Fire Department Station #1. There is an historical plaque at the front, marking the founding of Listowel in 1854.

23. Cenotaph Park. The municipal memorial to honor those who made the supreme sacrifice in world conflict is located here. There is also an historical plaque for Major Andrew McKeever, noted aviator from the first world war.

24. The Listowel Clock Tower was built in 1994 to house the restored clock from the old post office building torn down in 1982. The clockworks, restored by Neil and Tim Bakelaar and its 700 pound bell keeps the town on time. Plantings at the base of the tower are a project of the Listowel Horticultural Society.

25. Listowel Memorial Park, the municipality's best kept secret, started out as a 6 acre field. It was used for a fair grounds by the Listowel Agricultural Society, who purchased it in 1873. In 1885 the town bought the property. In 1887 the Memorial Park was established, and the first maple trees planted in 1890. Over the years the area was the site of a municipal water tower, demolished in the early 1980's, the decorative foundation now located at the PUC Pump House, a maple grove and golf course. Presently the Memorial Park contains the John Bell Ball Diamond, a Four Seasons garden, the Harvey Krotz Memorial Walking bridge, the Syd Henry Memorial gardens, the Rotary Walkway, and Elwood Smith fountain in the pond above the dam. Work continues on the park playgrounds, gardens, and the riverbank rejuvenation project.

26. The former Listowel Baptist Church is now home to THEATER 311, an independently owned, locally run, professional theater known for its variety of intellectually stimulating productions presented throughout the year.

Enjoy your walking tour, from the public sidewalk and please respect the rights of the property owners.

After your walking tour of Listowel, take time to patronize the sponsors of this walking tour guide. Their community spirit and commitment have made this project possible.

1960, then returned to a private residence, and currently serves as a retirement home.

7. The unique circular front verandah on the home at 440 Main Street West compliments the Queen Anne / Italianate architectural style. The original white brick was made from the marl bed near Gowanstown.

8. The Listowel Public Utilities Pump House is the town's only building with an Ontario Heritage Foundation designation. Built in the 1900's to house the pumps that provided drinking water, the building is now used as the North Perth Visitors and Business Information Center, as well as offices for the Chamber of Commerce and BIA. The fountain in front was first located at the Main & Wallace intersection to water horses, then it was moved to the Memorial Park, and in the 1920's was relocated to the PUC site.

9. This is the site of Listowel's first settler John Binning's log cabin. The present house is one of the oldest homes in Listowel. It was built in 1860, and in 1870 owner George Turner had the house turned halfway around so he could see his tannery located on the present Spinrite factory site. The tower and front half were added at that time. The house was the birthplace of Horatio Walker, "a well know painter of Canadian rural scenes". Mainly designed in the Italianate style the house was used as an officers mess for the Bennet Barracks stationed in Listowel in the 1940's.

10. "The Scott House", 517 Main Street West was the residence of the first postmaster of Listowel, J. M. Scott. This is believed to be the first brick house built in Listowel and is a fine example of "Ontario house design featuring a centered front door and center hall plan".

11. The towering home at 507 Main Street West was originally the home of Dr. W. C. Kidd, a well known veterinarian who introduced horse racing to Listowel. He was noted for shipping over 1000 locally raised horses to the British War Department during the Boer War. The home is in the Queen Anne style with "plenty of windows, chimneys and gables".

12. The Victorian style home at 165 Victoria Street North was built in 1902. This was the former home of H. B. Morphy Q.C. lawyer and member of provincial parliament. He was a well known cricket player in his day and placed four times on the Canadian International team. The red brick was imported from Ireland and note the oval stained glass window. When it was the home of Dr. Fraser Hay, the side and back rose gardens attracted visitors from across the province.

13. The picturesque home located at 415 Inkerman Street



The North Perth Communities in Bloom committee encourages community involvement in the beautification of the town. They were organized in 1998 and are

involved in a number of projects including: the PUC Pump House garden, the traffic island beds, and the gardens in Memorial Park. The gardens at the Cenotaph and the Clock Tower are a joint project with the Listowel Horticultural Society. Further, they are actively involved in the Middle Maitland Rejuvenation Committee Riverbank Naturalization Program.



The North Perth Trails committee was formed in 1997 to connect the three wards of North Perth with a trail system. The trail is for the most part,

the former railroad lines and run approximately 40 km; from Atwood to Listowel, Listowel to Gowanstown, and Listowel to Henfryn. The trail is used for walking, hiking, biking and cross country skiing.



Thanks to the staff of the Listowel Branch of the Stratford Perth Archives for their contribution to the notes that accompany many of the points of interest guide.