

BRUSSELS HISTORICAL WALKING TOUR

Brussels was originally called Ainleyville, named after one of the first settlers, William Ainlay, who laid out a town site on the Maitland River in 1855. The official name of the Post Office was Dingle, named after Ireland's Dingle Peninsula, perhaps. When the Southern Extension of the Great Western Railway line opened in December of 1872, the station at the north edge of town was named Brussels. Only days later, when the village was officially incorporated, its name was also changed to Brussels. The Post Office followed suit soon after.

By 1880, the village had a population of 1,000. In its heyday, the village had mills of every sort – planing, gristing, flouring, sawing—powered by water and steam. The last of these, the Logan Mill, located on the site of an earlier mill complex owned and operated by Vanstone and Sons, closed in 1967. The town's millpond is a reminder of an industry that once flourished here.



Please note that these walking tours do not provide access to privately owned homes and properties.

North Tour (Leckie Loop)



1 Brussels Conservation Area – 80 Alfred St.
Milling operations continued at this site until 1967. Maitland Valley Conservation Authority purchased the property in 1972. Enjoy a peaceful walk around the property. The Brussels Horticultural Society Butterfly Garden offers a quiet sanctuary and retreat.



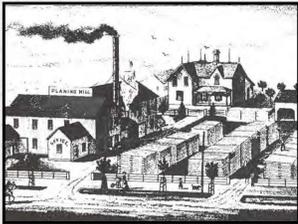
2 Leckie House – 62 Dunedin Dr.
Leckie House was built by a leading industrialist and the first Reeve of Brussels, John A. Leckie. In finest Queen Anne Revival style, it remains largely unchanged to this day. The limestone used in the foundation was quarried from the Maitland River, which flows behind the house.



3 Dunedin Manor – 54 Dunedin Dr.
Based on the beautiful design of Scotland's Dunedin Castle and built in 1887, Dunedin Manor has been home to generations of medical practitioners. It even served as the local maternity hospital from 1946-56. There was a time when it was known as one of the five great Victorian estates in south-western Ontario and featured rich gardens, fountains, stables and a tennis court.



4 Melville Presbyterian Church - 55 Dunedin Dr.
The Melville Presbyterians purchased an acre of land in 1857 and built a wooden structure to hold services in on the corner of Queen and Turnberry Streets. A brick church was built in 1872 and then in 1915, the current structure was built, which was designed by a Mr. Russell of Stratford and named after Andrew Melville.



5 Brussels Mennonite Fellowship and Former Bennett Lumber Yard – 250 Princess St.
This site was home to the Bennett Lumber Yard as early as 1879. In 1929, the McDonald family bought the yard and ran their business on Turnberry St; known today as McDonald Home Hardware Building Centre.

Incorporating an 1875 residence into their church, the Brussels Mennonite Fellowship officially opened in March of 1982 following extensive renovations. Additional improvements were carried out on the building in 1984.



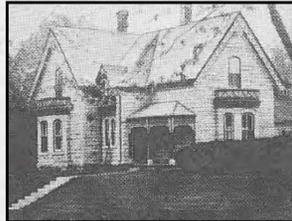
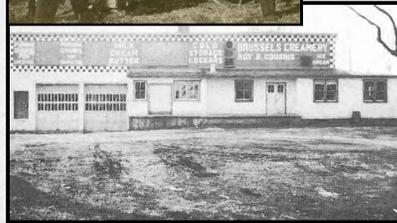
6 The Old Shop – 199 Turnberry St.
Don McNeil has always been a collector, starting as a child, and he especially likes to preserve the history of Brussels in memorabilia. This hobby has grown to encompass thousands of artifacts in his private museum. The museum is open by chance.



7 Brussels Optimist Club Clubhouse - 212 Turnberry St.
In 1873 the Wellington, Grey & Bruce Railway reached Brussels, running north of the Maitland River, but found itself in financial difficulty. It was taken over by the Grand Trunk Railway and eventually by Canadian National Railway from 1959 to 1991 when all rail service ceased in Brussels. The former station was dismantled and part of it was relocated to its present location. It was used by the Brussels Lawn Bowling Club and now by the Brussels Optimist Club.



8 Former Site of Ronald Engine Works & Cousins Creamery – 310 Stretton St.
Beginning in 1878, Ronald Engine Works was a foundry that built early fire engines widely sold nationally. When the foundry building burned, it was rebuilt in 1911 as the Shamrock Creamery, later re-named Brussels Creamery and then operated as Cousins Creamery until 1973. The building was used by a number of different tenants until it was demolished in 1993.



9 Former Presbyterian Manse – 41 Dunedin Dr.
The Presbyterian Manse, constructed of limestone from the Maitland River in 1869, served as the church manse until 1958 when the manse adjacent to Melville Presbyterian Church was built.

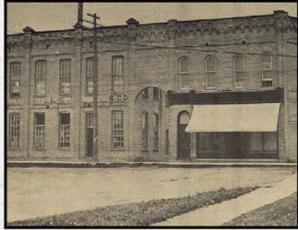


10 Lions Park – corner of Turnberry St. and Dunedin Dr.
Located north of the bridge on the west side of Turnberry Street, the Brussels Lions Park has served generations of local youth as the best toboggan hill in town. Founded in 1946, the Brussels Lions Club has contributed to many community betterment projects.



11 Former Brussels Electric Light Works and Anglo Petroleum Ltd. Site – 370-390 Turnberry St.

Early electricity in Brussels was provided by a steam-powered generating plant that in 1889, serviced six street lamps and the one light at the Town Hall. A chopping mill was built in 1905 immediately south of the Electric Light Works. The first gas station in the village was built here in 1928.



12 Former Howe's Woollen Mill and Wilson's Block – 373 and 390 Turnberry St.

373 Turnberry St. was the site of Howe's Woollen Mill, which was built in 1884. A carpet factory and a knitting factory also operated here. The building was demolished in 1967 to make way for a new medical/dental centre. The Brussels, Morris and Grey Municipal

Telephone System purchased the brick store adjoining the Woollen mill in 1909. After they moved in 1957, the municipal clerk's office occupied the space. The building was demolished following amalgamation in 2001.



13 Grant Block – 401-415 Turnberry St.

Mr. JR Grant, who was the postmaster at the time and owner of the property, constructed this unique flatiron building in 1879 following two devastating fires on the property. Later that same year, the post office was relocated to where it is today. This building has been occupied by a bank, a tailor, a hardware store, dry good merchant, furniture business and more recently a café. This is a designated heritage building.



14 Brussels Carnegie Library – 402 Turnberry St.

This library was constructed in 1910 under a Carnegie Foundation Grant, and was threatened with closure in 2007. The building underwent significant renovations in 2013, which added a room for programming, a larger children's area and improved accessibility. This is a designated heritage building.



15 Former American Hotel Site – 410 Turnberry St.

After a few hotel fires on the property, the new American Hotel was built in 1891. Ownership changed hands several times over the years, and the last hotel to occupy the building (and Brussels' last remaining hotel) before it was demolished in 2008 was the Brussels Country Inn.



16 Leckie Block – 435-441 Turnberry St.

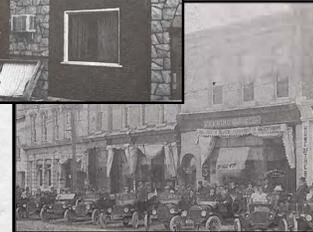
The 1876 Leckie Block is the oldest remaining commercial building on Brussels' main street. A number of banks branches have operated from this building, including: Exchange Bank of Canada; McIntosh and McTaggart Bank; and the Standard Bank. Major renovations were made to the exterior

(and interior) of the Standard Bank in 1909-10. The building has also been home to pharmacies, and Solace on Turnberry Spa. This is a designated heritage building.



17 Homecoming Park – 445 Turnberry St.

Homecoming Park used to be part of the Leckie Block 2. Although it changed ownership several times, a restaurant operated here between the 1940s and 1983. Olympia Restaurant and Turnberry Upholstery were destroyed by fire in October 1983.



18 Holmes Block – 440 – 450 Turnberry St.

This section of the main street has a long history of supplying hardware to rural and town residents. Several hardware stores operated from this location, including the Oldfield Hardware Store. Max Oldfield started the business in 1946 and eventually expanded north into the next two storefronts.





19 Graham Block – 503-521 Turnberry St.

Planned as a two-storey building in 1876, the Graham Block, when completed, boasted 15 foot ceilings on its main floor. Tenants have included, a dry goods merchant, drug store, millinery store, jewellery store and harness shop. Pictured here is the 5¢ to \$1.00 Store, which operated at this location from 1935 to 1991.



20 Brussels United Church – 61 King St.

The former Brussels Methodist Church, built in 1877, is an excellent example of Gothic Revival style architecture. In 1925, at Union, the Church became part of the United Church of Canada, known as Brussels United Church.

South Tour (Logan Loop)



21 Logan's Mill – 80 Alfred St.

The Vanstone Mill was the first structure on this site and was built in 1859. In 1871, the structure was destroyed by fire, taking out the neighbouring sawmill as well. It was re-built two years later, but again was destroyed by fire in 1911. Logan's Mill, which you see today, was constructed in 1915 and operated until 1967. It was eventually purchased and restored by the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority.



22 Brussels Morris Grey Community Centre & Arena – 800 Sports Dr.

The Brussels-Morris-Grey Community Centre & Arena was built in 1977 on a five acre parcel of land offered to the community by Jack Bryans for \$1. Additional land was donated by Malcolm Jacobs and Sam Workman for easements. This arena replaced the old one, which was located at 470 Elizabeth Street and was dismantled after being condemned.



23 Former Callander Nursing Home – 700 Turnberry St.

From Ross House to Baker's Convalescent Home to Callander Nursing Home, Brussels has always provided for its seniors. Callander Nursing Home operated at this location from 1961 to 1989. In 1993, Brussels was chosen by the County of Huron, as the location for Huronlea Home for the Aged (located at the south end of town).



24 St. John's Anglican Church – 51 McCutcheon Dr.

Replacing the small 1864 frame Anglican Church, St. John's Anglican Church was constructed and opened in 1876. All but the tower and bell were destroyed by fire in 1947, but the Church rebuilt and was rededicated in 1949. St. John's Anglican Church held their last service on April 30, 2023.



25 Former Brussels Public School – 650 Alexander St.

The school pictured here, was built in 1895 and housed both elementary and continuation school students. A six-room public school opened in 1961 and in 1966, a gym and three classrooms were added. The former Avon Maitland Brussels Public School closed in June 2012. The building was occupied by the Brussels Business & Cultural Centre and the Brussels Community Bible Chapel for a short time before being purchased for an Old Colony Christian School.



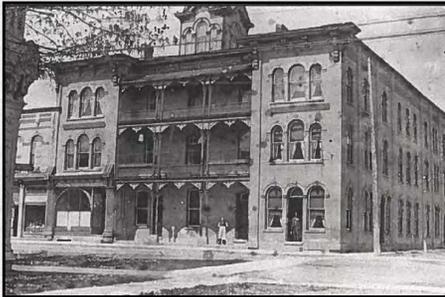
26 St. Ambrose Roman Catholic Church – 17 Flora St.

The congregation of St. Ambrose Roman Catholic Church held services in a frame church originally built in 1876 until 1993. A new 8,000 square foot church was built in 1993.



27 Former Brussels Fire Hall – 33 King St.

This is the site of the old Brussels Fire Hall. The Town Hall bell, that since 1872 had summoned firefighters, called residents to Sunday worship, and tolled for community grief, was incorporated into the landscape adjacent to the new Brussels Firehall built in 1994 (51 CN Rd.).



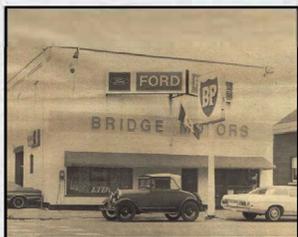
28 Former Queen's Hotel Site – 38 King St.

Built in 1878, the Queen's Hotel – Brussels centrepiece – was proclaimed in the Belden Atlas as 'one of the finest buildings ever seen in a town of its size.' A section of its façade is preserved in the Huron County Museum in Goderich.



29 Brussels Post Office – 586 Turnberry St.

This stately Post Office was built in 1935 as part of the federal government's economic stimulus efforts during The Great Depression. In the early days, mail was delivered by stagecoach. In 1891, Beattie Bros. next door was awarded the contract to deliver mail between the Brussels Post Office and the depot and return.



30 Former Beattie Bros. Livery Site – 590 Turnberry St.

The Beattie Bros. finished construction of their new livery barn in 1891. The building was converted into a garage in 1920. The business switched hands a few times before it was sold to Cities Service Oil Co. Ltd. in 1939. Cities Service sold the property to George Bridge in 1961 who a few years later set up with Ford Motor Co. to sell Ford cars and trucks. The original building was destroyed by fire in 1966.



31 Former East Huron Produce Emporium and Livery – 589 Turnberry St.

The East Huron Produce Emporium was in business from 1906 until 1955. The Emporium sold apples from the local apple orchard (now Mait-side Orchards), graded eggs and killed and packaged poultry. Egg grading continued for many years after the business switched hands in 1955. The building was torn down in 1986 and is now a municipal parking lot used for community events and markets. The former livery still stands.



32 Brussels Royal Canadian Legion Branch 218 – 620 Turnberry St.

Formed in 1931, the Brussels Legion survived a 1988 break-in, theft, and destructive fire. It re-opened in 1989 and continues to contribute to the community from the site that formerly held the original town hall.



33 Brussels Community Park (also referred to as Victoria Park) – 648 Sports Dr.

Designed in 1854 as a market square or common by village founder William Ainlay, Brussels Community Park continues to serve the community recreationally, hosting sports, carnivals and homecomings.

HISTORIC POINTS OF INTEREST

Mait-side Orchards – 23 Orchard Lane

The 20-acre property located at 23 Orchard Lane consists of an apple orchard that originated circa 1912. While most of the trees were removed in the early 2000's for a proposed housing development, former owner Lewis Cardiff returned home to re-invigorate the orchard after the housing plan fell through.

Masonic Chapel – 41 Orchard Lane

This miniature St. John's Masonic Chapel replica is located in the Masonic Memorial Park on Orchard Lane. The chapel was officially dedicated on May 29, 1994 by the Brussels Masonic Lodge, and the interior is complete with an altar and pews. There is a beautiful view of the Maitland River from this site.