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Kirkfield Lift Lock (Kirkfield Road)

Opened in 1907, the Kirkfield Lift Lock is situated at the highest point along the Trent-Severn Waterway.

Designed by Richard Birdsall Rodgers (who took inspiration from the boat lifts on Belgium's Canal du Centre), it was completed a few years after its larger sibling in Peterborough and raises boats to a height of 14.9 metres. In 1969, the lift lock was reinforced with concrete, and it is today one of the most-photographed attractions in Kawartha Lakes.

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Carden Alvar

The Carden Alvar is one of Ontario's newest provincial parks. Established in 2014, it is situated on land once home to the Cameron and Windmill Ranches – the latter once owned and farmed by the late John Arthur (Art) Hatwin (1921-2014), a veteran of the Royal Canadian Air Force and a prisoner of war at Stalag Luft III near Sagan, Germany. The Carden Alvar is an Important Birding Area (IBA), with over 230 species of birds recorded within its 1,917 hectares.

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Laidlaw Drystone Walls (Balsam Lake Drive)

The three kilometres of drystone walls lining both sides of Balsam Lake Drive represent the intricate craftsmanship of Scottish stonemasons, who were hired by the Scottish-born George Laidlaw to build the walls throughout his extensive estate on the western shores of Balsam Lake. The walls kept Laidlaw's cattle and sheep enclosed within the bounds of his ranch known as "The Fort," and are today being lovingly restored by his descendants.

Driving Directions

Start your tour at the Oakwood Library. Travel west on Highway 7A then turn right on Eldon Road. Travel on Eldon Road (County Road 46) until you reach Woodville Road. Turn left on Woodville Road and travel towards Woodville. Drive through Woodville and see the townhall on your right hand side. Soon you will reach Nappadale Street, also known as County Road 46.

Turn right to travel north on County Road 46. You will pass through Argyle and Lorneville and pass the McQuarrie Mansion and the CPR Station. The road will end at Portage Road. Turn left on the Portage Road then right onto Bolsover Road to explore Bolsover. When you have finished exploring Bolsover, return back to the Portage Road and turn left. Travel along Portage Road to Centennial Park Road and turn left to visit the Canal Lake Arch Bridge, just up the road.

Return to the Portage Road and turn left to continue to Kirkfield. In Kirkfield, turn left to travel north along the Kirkfield Road which will take you to the Lift Lock. Continue on Kirkfield Road to McNamee Road where you will find Carden Alvar. Continue along McNamee Road to Victoria Road. Turn right and travel south to the Portage Road. Turn left on the Portage Road then soon after, right onto Balsam Lake Drive.

Oakwood to Kirkfield

Historic Driving Tour

Kawartha Lakes



1 Oakwood Library (932 Highway 7)

Start your tour at the Oakwood Library in the heart of Oakwood. The building was built in 1913-14 to serve School Section No. 12 in the former Mariposa Township.

In 1911, local trustees voted to build a new school against the wishes of bitter ratepayers. When the school inspector threatened to have government funding cut off, the ratepayers agreed to have a new school built.

Incorporating elements of Romanesque Revival architecture, this facility served the educational needs of local students through 1985 and is today home to the Oakwood branch of the City of Kawartha Lakes Public Library.

2 Peniel United Church (407 County Road 46)

This rural Methodist church was constructed in 1913 to replace an older church from the 1880s and blew down in a windstorm. It became a United church with the church union of 1925. The Methodists were the largest denomination in the area at the turn of the century and it is reflected in this large rural church which was the main religious institution for the area and the hub of the Peniel agricultural community.

3 Woodville Town Hall (100A King Street)

Woodville Town Hall was built in 1903 and has served as an important community hub for over a century. The main hall was used by residents of Woodville and the surrounding rural hamlets for community events and includes a unique second floor balcony. There are many interesting architectural elements in this building including its interior woodwork and belfry.

4 Lorneville

Lorneville was once the junction of the Midland Railway and the Toronto & Nipissing Railway. The latter ran north-south through the village connecting Toronto and Coboconk; the former ran east-west linking Lindsay and Midland. Both were absorbed by the Canadian National Railway in 1923 and were abandoned in the 1960s. At its peak, Lorneville boasted a general store, a school, a hotel, and a busy railway station. Today, only the store and school remain in situ.

5 Argyle

Argyle, so named for the Duke of Argyle, was settled by Scottish families in the 19th Century. By 1910, it had two general stores, a blacksmith shop, a chopping mill, a hotel, a Presbyterian Church, and rail access via the Toronto & Nipissing Railway to the west. For over fifty years, the Fleming family's general store was a local landmark. Although the store has closed, visitors still stop in Argyle to check out Merry Mac's Antiques and Collectibles in the former Mitchell Blacksmith Shop, and sample delicious baked goods in the former Royal Hotel – now home to the Argyle Farm Market and Bakery.

6 CPR Eldon Station (1969 County Road 46)

This station was built in 1911 by the Georgian Bay & Seaboard Railway, a subsidiary of the Canadian Pacific Railway. Built to facilitate the shipment of prairie grain from Port McNicoll to Montreal, the railway fell on hard times in the 1930s and was abandoned between Lindsay and Orillia in 1938. The CPR's Eldon Station facility is one of only two still in situ on this route. Now a private home, this plain-featured station evokes similar CPR structures found in many parts of western Canada. Please be aware that this is a private property.

7 Bolsover

The village of Bolsover is situated on the shores of the Talbot Canal and traces its origins to the 1860s. Be sure to check out the former S.S. No. 5 Eldon schoolhouse, built in 1901; the historic Presbyterian cemetery; and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church – an excellent example of an avant-garde place of worship in a rural setting. Finish your self-guided tour of Bolsover by travelling across the Boundary Road Swing Bridge, a new structure which maintains the historic appearance of the original swing bridge dating to 1902.

8 Canal Lake Arch Bridge

Completed in 1905, the stunning Canal Lake arch bridge – known locally as the “Hole In The Wall Bridge” – is notable for being the earliest structure in Canada built from reinforced concrete. It incorporates the Melan system of curved steel girders to reduce the amount of concrete required in its construction. Markings on the surface of the concrete on either side of the arch evoke the appearance of masonry stones, adding to the unique character of this National Historic Site. Bridge is best viewed from the water.

9 Kirkfield

The village of Kirkfield grew up along the historic Portage Road (now Highway 48) and owed much of its growth and development to the emergence of the Toronto & Nipissing Railway in the 1870s. Sir William MacKenzie (1849-1923), one of Canada's railway contractors, grew up in the village and later built for his family a palatial summer home in 1888. Today, the Sir William MacKenzie Inn is a popular wedding venue and is rumoured to be among the most haunted buildings in Kawartha Lakes. Across the way, the former St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, built in 1905, has been home to the Kirkfield & District Historical Society's museum since 2010.