

The Bofors Gun was an anti-aircraft autocannon developed in the 1930s by the Swedish armaments company AB Bofors. It was one of the most popular medium-weight anti-aircraft systems during the Second World War, used by most of the western Allies during the conflict.



*Figure 85. Memorial Park on May 23rd, 1977. Notice the Waterdown Standpipe being constructed next to the old water tower.*

### ***Memorial Park, Waterdown's Backyard<sup>62</sup>***

Continuing the tradition established by the creation of Memorial Hall following the First World War, villagers wanted to commemorate the service of their neighbours during the Second World War by establishing something that could also be used by the community in perpetuity.

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<sup>62</sup> The descriptor "Waterdown's Backyard" was coined by Cameron Scot during a meeting of a Public Art Focus Group for Memorial Park at the Waterdown BIA Office on June 5th, 2019.



*Figure 86. L-R Roy Wilkinson, Wm. Gunby (former reeve), Vern Willis, Robert McKay with Stan Zimmerman on the tractor. Members of the Parks Committee, Memorial Park, ca. 1946.*

In August 1946, 12 acres of land, formerly a sand and gravel quarry, was purchased for \$1,200 from the Anderson Family by the Waterdown Amateur Athletic Association, Waterdown Women's Institute and the Waterdown Board of Trade.

Together, these organizations (joined by the Flamboro & Waterdown Agricultural Society in 1949) created "Memorial Park," expanding the space to include an additional 8 acres, which was donated with the stipulation that it remain forever a community park for the use of everyone. Memorial Park was formally dedicated on August 18th, 1949, to the memory of more than 100 Waterdown and East Flamborough residents who served in the Second World War, including eight young men who died overseas.

Waterdown's Memorial Park has been the focus of many village events, including Victoria and Canada Day fireworks, various sports, the Twilight Market, and many festivals.



*Figure 87a. A modified Ribfest was held August 6-8th, 2021, due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The previous year's event was canceled due to the pandemic. This photograph was taken by the author on August 7th.*

Since 2009, the annual Waterdown “Oh Canada” Ribfest has become the unofficial start of summer for the community. Hosted by the Rotary Clubs of Flamborough and Waterdown, the four-day event typically attracts more than 30,000 visitors to Memorial Park around Canada Day every year.

To commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II, as well as the 200th anniversary of the beginning of the War of 1812, students from Waterdown District High School planted a red maple tree in Memorial Park on July 1st, 2012.



Figure 87b. *The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell stands behind The Queen's Bench while Sophie Tidridge and Alayna and Celina Rivait are seated on it. September 9th, 2015.*

Memorial Park's *Queen's Tree* continued a Flamborough tradition of planting trees to commemorate important milestones in the reign of Elizabeth II – oak trees were planted by Mayor Ken and Mae Harper in 1977 for the Queen's Silver Jubilee.<sup>63</sup> (see section “Kenneth (Ken) Harper”).

On September 9th, 2015, joining other celebrations across the world, the Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, 29th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, travelled to Memorial Park to unveil *The Queen's Bench* in honour of Elizabeth II becoming the longest-reigning monarch in Commonwealth history. Engraved with milestones of the reign of Elizabeth II as Queen of Canada, the bench is located near *The Queen's Tree*.

The unveiling included a teaching around the Covenant Chain by Rill Hill of the Tuscarora Nation and attended by over 100 members of the community.

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<sup>63</sup> An oak tree is located behind the parking lot of the Waterdown Branch of the Hamilton Public Library at 163 Dundas St E (site of the former Flamborough Township Hall), while another one was planted at the former mayor's residence at 49 8th Concession Road East, Harper's Corners.

Major projects completed in the park include the *Waterdown Skatepark* (completed in 2006 by New Line Skateparks<sup>64</sup>), and the *Waterdown Rotary Memorial Park Skating Loop*, inspired by Pat McNally and opened on July 6th, 2016. A paved trail around the northern half of the park was also completed in 2016.



*Figure 88. The construction of the "Waterdown Heights" survey signaled the beginning of a new chapter in Waterdown's history: The arrival of the mass-produced subdivision (homes with similar floorplans that allowed them to be built rapidly in pre-designed neighbourhoods). Subdivisions would be the model for Waterdown's growth for the next 50 years. Photograph taken ca. 1951.*

### ***Waterdown Transformed into Suburbia***

Thanks to the automobile becoming more accessible to middle- and working-class families following the Second World War a flood of people left the cities looking for a place to live "in the country." In a few short decades Waterdown was completely transformed into a suburban hub as more and more surveys were added to every nook and cranny of the village.

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<sup>64</sup> Local young people forced the early opening of the skatepark despite being issued tickets by police.

The common sight of open fields within the village boundaries vanished by the turn of the century as the centre of the community shifted from its traditional pedestrian-core to a new automobile-friendly plaza and shopping centre built near the intersection of Dundas and Hamilton Street.

#### Waterdown Suburban Development Timeline:

**1945** - Waterdown Heights (Wellington Street & Churchill Street) becomes the village's first post-war housing survey.

**1951** - St. Thomas the Apostle Creed Catholic School is opened on Barton Street.

**1952** - Highway Six is widened to accommodate more traffic.

**1952** - Hawksview Gardens Subdivision Registered (Howard Blvd & Orchard Drive).

**1954** - Waterdown Gardens Survey Registered (James Street & Margaret Street).

**1954** - Waterdown Public School at 211 Mill Street North is renamed Mary Hopkins Public School.

**1958** - Margaret Gardens Survey Registered (north James Street).

**1959** - Clappison Drive-In opens on Parkside Drive, accommodating 930 cars.

**1962** - Berry Hill Court Registered.

**1964** - Village Plaza (Hamilton Street - east side) is opened.

**1964** - Guy B. Brown Public School is opened at 55 Braeheid Ave.

**1967** - Sewers are installed in the village.

**1968** - First apartment building (Waterdown Towers, 100 John Street West) built on John Street (overlooking Memorial Park). Other apartment buildings will be built in 1972 (50 John Street West) and 1973 (75 John Street West).

**1970** - Glenlea Survey Registered (Nancy Crescent).

**1971** - Edith Court Registered.



*Figure 89. The old Braeburn house sits on the site of the Braeburn Apartment Building at the southeast corner of Hamilton Street and Dundas Street, ca. 1960.*

**1971** - The Braeburn apartment building built on the site of the Braeburn Farm at the corner of Dundas Street and Hamilton Street.

**1974** - The Village of Waterdown is amalgamated with the Townships of East Flamborough, West Flamborough and Beverly to become the Township of Flamborough.

**1975** - Buchan Court Survey Registered.

**1977** - Waterdown Standpipe constructed on Kelly Street (replacing original water tower built in 1928).

**1981** - Renwood Park Survey Registered (Flanders Drive).

**1985** - The Township of Flamborough becomes the Town of Flamborough

**1988** - Waterdown Shopping Centre built at 255 Dundas St E.

**1993** - Newest campus of Waterdown District High School is opened at 215 Parkside Drive.

**1995** - Dundas Street is widened to accommodate the increase in traffic.



Figure 90. The new commercial hub of Waterdown that emerged in the later-half of the 20th century at the intersection of Hamilton Street and Dundas Street clearly shows the impact of the automobile on the development of the village (centralized shopping plazas with lots of parking). The old downtown can be seen in the top right.

**2000** - Fortinos Plaza built at 115 Hamilton St N.

**2000** - Joe Sams Leisure Park is established north of the village.

**2000** - Allan A. Greenleaf Public School is opened on the WDHS Campus at 215 Parkside Drive.

**2001** - Flamborough is annexed into the new City of Hamilton.

**2004** - Guardian Angels Catholic Elementary School is opened at 705 Centre Road.

**2009** - Walmart opens at 90 Dundas Street East.

**2019** - *The View* Condo Tower opens at 30 Hamilton Street South.

**2022** - *Trend Living* Condo Tower Complex opens in East Waterdown at 512 Dundas Street East.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Thanks to Alissa Golden, Heritage Project Specialist, City of Hamilton, for her help creating this list.





*Figure 91. Braeheid Sod Supply. ca.1960s. Waterdown had two sod farms on the 4th Concession (now Parkside Drive). Braeheid Sod Supply was located where the YMCA is now, and also ran between Highway 5 to Parkside Drive. The Braeheid survey was built on what was once fields of sod.*

### **Ernie Weeks (1911-2013)**

One of Waterdown's most beloved citizens was Ernie Weeks.

After attending Waterdown District High School (where he was given the first ever Alumni of the Year Award in 1928) Weeks served in the Royal Canadian Air Force during the Second World War.

After being called to a secret meeting by the Canadian government concerned with Soviet aggression, Weeks began flying missions to Canada's far north, mapping the many islands and lakes of the region.