

Bowring Park

Opened July 15, 1914

- W Accessible Washrooms
- P Water Station
- P Parking
- P Accessible Parking
- Paved Roads (Accessible year round)
- Bridges
- Walking Trails (May include stairs and uneven surfaces)

Bowring Park is a popular family retreat in St. John's, NL. It is located in the Waterford Valley, approximately 4.5 km west of City Hall, and it is framed by the Waterford River on the north boundary and South Brook on the south boundary.

This park was a gift to the City from Bowring Brothers Ltd. on the occasion of its 100th business anniversary in Newfoundland in 1911. It was originally 50 acres when it first opened in 1914 and ended at what is now the Overpass. The City of St. John's expanded it in the 1950s and it is now 200 acres, the largest of the municipal parks.

In 1911, Bowring Brothers – a successful trade and shipping firm – commemorated their 100th business anniversary in Newfoundland by giving the City of St. John's a 20-hectare (50-acre) recreational park as a token of their appreciation to the local community. The Park was officially opened on July 15, 1914. Today, Bowring Park is over 81 hectares (200 acres) – the largest of the City's parks.

Sir Edgar Bowring commissioned celebrated Montreal landscape architect Frederick Todd (1876-1948) to design the Park's layout and supervise its construction, which was then delegated to his colleague, fellow landscape architect Rudolph Cochius (1880-1944). Cochius lived and worked in the Park from 1912 to 1917 and oversaw all technical aspects of the Park's construction. His vision and artistry are considered to be the heart and soul of the Park.

Angel's Grove

This site was dedicated in 1998 to the memory of all babies lost through miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, stillbirth, and newborn death.

Beech Tree & Rustic Benches

The Beech Tree was planted by the Governor General of Canada, the Viscount Alexander of Tunis, on his first visit to Newfoundland in 1949. The benches beneath were hand-carved from young spruce – the design originally used for all the furniture, fences, and bridges in the Park.

Bell

Originally installed in a tower, former park superintendents pulled a rope to ring the bell, signaling to park patrons the Park's 10:00 p.m. closing time.

Bob Whelan Multi-Purpose Field

Named in recognition of Bob Whelan, the founder of the Kilbride Recreation Association, this field is used for everything from picnics to playing catch.

Bowring Park Lodge

Now the location of the Bowring Park Foundation office, the Lodge was constructed in 1913 to serve as the residence for landscape architect Rudolph Cochius, and was subsequently occupied by several park superintendents throughout the Park's history.

Cantilever Bridge

This bridge is especially interesting as it is anchored only on one end and does not touch the ground on the other end. In 1958, the Montreal architectural firm Van Ginkel Associates, with Ove Arup as the structural engineering consultant, designed this bridge for use as a pedestrian overpass above the Canadian National Railway line. Arup, one of the world's most brilliant structural engineers, also made possible the construction of the Sydney Opera House in Australia. The Cantilever Bridge underwent rehabilitation in 2023 to help maintain this significant heritage structure in St. John's, which received Provincial and Municipal Heritage Designation in 2020 due to its age, architectural, and environmental value.

Caribou Memorial & Beaumont Hamel Replica Plaques

The Caribou – the official insignia of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment – was unveiled as a tribute on July 1, 1928. The Caribou was created by sculptor Basil Gotto, who also created the Park's Fighting Newfoundlanders statue. This Caribou, like its counterparts in the six European battlefields parks, gazes in the same direction in which the men of the Regiment would have faced enemy forces. Together, they form what is known as the Trail of the Caribou. The plaques are exact replicas of those in Beaumont Hamel, France. They list the names of 820 Newfoundlanders, seamen, and sailors who died in the First World War and have no known graves.

Cochius' Plaque

A humble tribute to Rudolph Cochius, the landscape architect who was assigned the task of bringing Frederick Todd's design for Bowring Park to reality. The Bowring Park Lodge was built as his residence while he oversaw all construction and subsequent landscape design. Other than Bowring Park, Cochius is best known for his work, with sculptor Basil Gotto, on the First World War memorial sites to the Royal Newfoundland Regiment in Northern France and Belgium – part of the Trail of the Caribou.

Commemorative Tree Planting Bulletin

Through the City of St. John's Commemorative Program, a tree in the Park may be chosen to memorialize the loss of a loved one or commemorate a birth, anniversary, graduation, or special occasion. As part of the program, the contributor's name is added to this bulletin display.

Confederation Monument

This hedged rest area features benches and lampposts identical to those found along Confederation Boulevard in Ottawa, donated by the National Capital Commission in 1997 as a symbol of connection between the Nation's capital and the other capital cities of Canada.

Connaught Stone, Linden Tree & The Gnome

This block of native granite once stood beneath a linden tree planted by the Duke of Connaught during the official opening of the Park. Although the historic tree was destroyed in 2010 during Hurricane Igor, a new linden tree was planted in its place by St. John's Mayor Dennis O'Keefe and students from Hazelwood Elementary in 2011. Atop the stone is The Gnome, a small bronze sculpture created by renowned sculptor Ferdinand Blundstone, who also created three of the five bronze figures at the Newfoundland and Labrador National War Memorial on Water Street in downtown St. John's. Behind The Gnome, the word "Humbug" can be seen engraved on the stone. It is believed that this stone was once used as a headstone for Humber, the canine companion of former Prime Minister of Newfoundland Sir Richard Squires.

Conservatory

Built in 1947 as a greenhouse to grow plants for the Park, it was reconstructed as a Conservatory in 1996. It houses a variety of rare and exotic plants and shrubs from around the world.

Duck Pond

This is a popular and scenic location to admire the ducks and other wildlife. Designed by Rudolph Cochius, it was completed in 1913 and originally used for leisurely boating around a small island that was once in the middle of the pond.

Fighting Newfoundlanders

In 1918, Corporal Thomas Pittman of the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, who was present on the front lines during the Battle of Beaumont Hamel, posed for this statue which was created by sculptor Basil Gotto, who also created the Park's Caribou statue. The monument was unveiled on September 13, 1922, as a memorial to the Newfoundland soldiers who fought in the First World War.

Fishway

The Fishway allows free passage past dams and bridges for brown trout and Atlantic salmon to migrate to sea and back again to complete their life cycle.

Fountain Pond

Constructed in the 1970s as a fishpond, and featuring a fountain which was originally installed in St. John's Baptist Cathedral Basilica, this pond underwent a significant reconstruction and enhancement in 2008.

Horse Trough

The last of its kind in St. John's, this cast iron trough once stood on Water Street to service the working horses of the day. As the use of horses declined the trough was used less and less, and was moved to the Park in 1965. The cobblestones in the wall behind the Horse Trough also came from Water Street.

Jamie Morry Soccer Field

This soccer field is dedicated to the memory of Jamie Morry (1962-1999), who grew up in nearby Kilbride (now a neighbourhood of St. John's).

Labyrinth

Officially opened on October 8th, 2021, this wheelchair-accessible labyrinth is based on the famous 13th-century labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Chartres, France. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has only one path that leads to its centre, which here features the Bowring Park Foundation's logo engraved in granite. Although they are ancient in origin, there has been a resurgence of interest in labyrinths, whose paths are often travelled for contemplation, inspiration, and fun.

Midstream Green

A lawn bowling facility, providing fun and recreation for park patrons of all ages.

Neaveh Denine Splash Pad

First opened in 2009, in 2019 this zero-depth wheelchair-accessible splash pad was dedicated to the memory of Neaveh Denine (2009 - 2018) to honour the legacy she

created through her lemonade stand. Since Neaveh's idea in 2014 to hold the "biggest lemonade stand ever" as a way to give back to her community, Neaveh's Lemonade Stand and Neaveh's Angel Foundation has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars to support families and children living with paediatric cancer in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Newfoundland T Railway

This recreational trail traverses 883 kilometres from the City of St. John's to the Town of Channel-Port aux Basques using the former Canadian National Railway line, which ran through Bowring Park.

Old Swimming Pool

In the 1920s a section of the eastern side of South Brook River near the Stone Bridge was dammed to make a natural swimming pool. It remained a popular attraction for over 40 years until a newer outdoor pool was constructed in the late 1960s.

Overpass

The Overpass defines the boundary between the original Park to the east and the newer area of the Park to the west.

Peter Pan Statue

Unveiled on Children's Day in 1925, this statue is a celebration of childhood in memory of Sir Edgar Bowring's granddaughter Betty Munn, who lost her life in the sinking of the S.S. *Horizon* near Capahayden, NL in 1918. This statue is the work of British sculptor Sir George Frampton. The first Peter Pan statue is located in Kensington Gardens in London, England, and Frampton made six other full-size casts from the original moulds, of which this is one. The others are found in Brussels, Liverpool, Perth, Toronto, and Camden.

Playground

Although a well-loved playground has existed in this area since the 1960s, the current playground opened in 2009, and has accessible features that aim to reduce barriers for disabled children.

Royal Bank Bridge

This bridge built over Captain's Falls at the westernmost end of South Brook River allows for a circuitous pathway around the Park. Prior to the construction of this bridge in 1995, park patrons could not walk the perimeter of the Park. The view to the east consists of the large waterfalls cascading down through a heavily wooded river valley. To the west is the South Brook River quietly meandering through a grassy treed area as it approaches the falls.

Rustic Gazebo

The Gazebo was built in 1914 with a unique self-supporting roof structure that doesn't require a central post support.

Skate Park

A professionally designed, challenging facility with rails and jumps suitable for bicycles, scooters, and skateboards. Don't forget your helmet!

Sliding Hill

A popular spot for families in the winter, this hill is perfect for sliding in the snow.

South Brook Trail

This trail is approximately 1.5 kilometres, traveling along the South Brook River and across Royal Bank Bridge, to the west end of the Park. The Waterford River Walk and South Brook Trail are part of an extensive network of walks called the Grand Concourse, whose 200-kilometre walkway network stretches beyond the Park across the metro St. John's region.

Squires' Well

This well supplied the estate – known as Midstream – of Sir Richard Squires, former Prime Minister of Newfoundland. His residence on the property – called Cherry Lodge – was demolished in the 1970s, but he well still stands.

St. John's Cabot 500 Amphitheatre

Planning for the Amphitheatre began in 1997 as a legacy for that year's 500th anniversary celebration of Italian

explorer John Cabot's expedition to North America under the commission of Henry VII, King of England. Cabot's expedition is the earliest known European exploration of coastal North America since the Norse visits to Vinland in the 11th century.

The Amphitheatre was officially opened on June 24, 2000, and is the venue for many theatrical and musical performances every year. It is located near an area known as "Midstream," where former Prime Minister of Newfoundland Sir Richard Squires owned an estate with a residence and farm. His residence, called "Cherry Lodge," was demolished in the 1970s, but the well that supplied the estate still stands.

Stone Bridge

Constructed in 1931 with pink granite stones and bent tracks from the Canadian National railway line that once ran through the Park, remnants of a wall from the iconic old swimming pool constructed in the South Brook River can be seen immediately upstream.

Sundial

The sundial was donated to the park by the Bowring Family in memory of Sir Edgar Bowring. During sunny days with unobstructed skies the dial is quite accurate and draws many curious visitors.

Susan Harvey Patten Pool House

This accessible and family-oriented facility officially opened on July 6, 2017. The Pool House was subsequently named to recognize the contributions of Susan Harvey Patten to the City of St. John's on July 10, 2019. Patten has served as a lifelong volunteer of numerous organizations including Girl Guides of Canada, the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, and the Canadian Mental Health Association. She is a member of the Order of Canada, the Order of Newfoundland and Labrador, and the Newfoundland and Labrador Volunteer Hall of Fame.

Swimming Pool

Constructed in the 1960s to replace the Old Swimming Pool in the South Brook River, it is a popular family attraction in St. John's. It is fully accessible with a pool lift, accessible change rooms, and accessible washroom.

Tennis Courts

Several grass tennis courts were built in the 1920s and were so popular that new hard courts were added and opened to the public in 1946.

The Bungalow

Built between 1913-1915, the Bungalow is as old as the Park itself. Originally constructed to serve as a gathering place as well as a location for refreshments and snacks, the Bungalow remains a popular location with its lush lawn, sundial, and weeping beech tree. Most recently it has been a favourite spot to host weddings, ceremonies, and other events.

Waterford River Walk

The Waterford River Walk and South Brook Trail are part of an extensive network of walks called the Grand Concourse, whose 200-kilometre walkway network stretches beyond the Park across the metro St. John's region.

Weeping Beech

Planted in 1916, it stands out because it is a grafted tree. The root system for the weeping beech could not survive the Newfoundland climate so the top part of the tree was grafted onto the trunk and root system of a green beech on the lawn of the Bungalow. There have been many initials carved into this tree over the years.

Wheeler's Back Falls

Use your imagination when you look down at the rock formation in the Waterford River. Can you see the whale's back?

The City of St. John's

The City of St. John's, the capital city of Newfoundland and Labrador, maintains over 3,000 hectares (nearly 7,500 acres) of open space, more than 100 kilometres of walking trails, and maintains four municipal parks including Bowring Park. The City has over 130 playgrounds and dozens of community and neighbourhood parks, 23 sports fields, 11 dog parks, and seven skate parks.

ST. JOHN'S

The Bowring Park Foundation

The Bowring Park Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, was established in 1995 and is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Its mandate is to assist the City of St. John's in the restoration, conservation, beautification, and development of Bowring Park.



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