
INVERMERE BC HISTORICAL TOUR

PAMPHLETS
AVAILABLE AT THE
MUSEUM

HISTORICAL SITES

1. Windermere Valley Museum
2. Kootenay Lodge
3. Invermere's first hospital
4. Strand's Old House Restaurant
5. Site of first Livery Stable
6. Pynelogs Cultural Centre
7. Fort Point
8. Canterbury House
9. Cleland House
10. Canadian Bank of Commerce
11. Avenue A and McKay House
12. Village Arts
13. David Thompson and Charlotte Small Statue And Pot Hole Park

Windermere District Historical Society
250.342.9769
Box 2315 ■ 222 6th Avenue
Invermere ■ BC ■ V0A 1K0
wvmuseum@shaw.ca
<https://www.windermerevalleymuseum.ca>

1 WINDERMERE VALLEY MUSEUM

The Windermere Valley Museum complex currently consists of eleven buildings, nine of which are heritage structures. The main building is the Lake Windermere Canadian Pacific Railway log station, built in 1914 and originally situated in Athalmer. In 1975 a coal train derailed, hitting the station and damaging it extensively. The station was sold to the Windermere District Historical Society for \$1.00. With funding from a Federal Grant, the remains of the station was moved to its present site and restored. The other eight buildings in the Museum complex have been relocated from other sites in the valley; restored, if needed, and available to tour. The history of all the buildings can be found in a display at the museum.

2 KOOTENAY LODGE

This home was built in 1912-1913 by A.J. Dobbie for B.G. Hamilton, a prominent businessman and later the valley historian. Through his interest in archaeology, Hamilton discovered the site of David Thompson's trading post, Kootenae House; built in 1807, Kootenae House was the first trading post in southeastern B.C.

Mr. Hamilton's home, called 'Kootenay Lodge', is classed as a bungalow, and contains six rooms at ground level, three rooms upstairs, and has a large basement. The original property boundary extended well beyond the site of the present-day Alliance Church, and included a large garden, barn and garage.

3 FIRST HOSPITAL

The first Invermere Hospital was built in 1914 on 10th street. It was actually the third hospital in the District with the first two hospitals having been located in Wilmer. Salary for staff was as follows: a Matron received \$40 a month; a nurse received \$35 a month; a cook received \$35 a month, all included room and board; and a Doctor received \$50 a month. At times it was difficult to staff the hospital so volunteers were needed.

Patients paid \$2.50 a day in a public ward or, like now, more for a private room. After delivering a child, staying in the maternity ward was \$5.00 for 12 days.

4 STRAND'S OLD HOUSE RESTAURANT

Constructed in 1912 for Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Ritchie, this house was purchased about 1920 by Dr. and Mrs. Filmer Coy. Dr. Coy, for many years, served as the only medical practitioner between Golden and Cranbrook. In 1946, Mr. and Mrs. Ian Weir purchased the house. Mrs. Weir operated the first kindergarten in Invermere from their home for many years. The Weirs sold the house to Tim Strand who opened the restaurant on the site. The restaurant features small dining rooms named after the previous owners of the building.

5 INVERMERE LIVERY

The Invermere Contracting Company, which was formed in 1912, constructed a Livery on this site for horses that were hauling ore from the mines on Toby Creek. The Contracting Company had, as its original shareholders, prominent local citizens, R.R. Bruce, Alex Ritchie and George Starke. In 1935, the Livery was converted into a garage repairing and selling vehicles for more than four decades. Today the site is home to Birchwood Restaurant and Ullr (Ew lar) Bar.

6 PYNELOGS CULTURAL CENTRE

This building was constructed in 1915 for Robert Randolph Bruce and his bride, Lady Elizabeth Northcote. Tragically, Lady Elizabeth died before her home was completed. Her grave is immediately south of the building overlooking Lake Windermere. Mr. Bruce moved to Victoria when he became Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia in 1926. He donated the property, known as Pynelogs, to the community to be used as a hospital. Officially opened in 1937 as a memorial to Lady Elizabeth, the building functioned as a hospital until 1956. It was then used as a Senior Citizen's Home and later, a mental institution. In May 1990, Pynelogs was reopened as a Cultural Centre, showcasing local arts and crafts.

7 FORT POINT

The original name of this point of land was Canterbury Point. It became Invermere Point when the town site was laid out in 1911. A well-established golf course, opened in the same year. In 1922, the CPR built a Lodge and cabins for the tourists arriving on the Kootenay Central Railway. Then the CPR with the Hudson's Bay Company built a fort as a memorial to David Thompson. It was then, that the area became known as Fort Point. The tourist camp was later purchased by a group of local people who subdivided the land and sold each cabin individually. In 1956 the Weirs bought the CPR Lodge and later gave it to the District of Invermere. In 2010 it was moved to its present site overlooking Dorothy Lake.

Below the Lodge site is a historically significant stump, which has burn marks from a campfire that was made by the explorer David Thompson and his party when they first arrived here in 1807. For detailed directions to the stump see "On the Trail of David Thompson" tour.

8 CANTERBURY HOUSE

Built in the 1920's as a police barracks, the original interior of the building included a jail with two cells for prisoners, a courtroom and living quarters for the policeman. One of the first policemen to take up residence in the building was Mr. Bob Pritchard. In 1962, the RCMP moved to a location at the north end of Invermere. The old barracks still functioned as a courthouse and held the offices of the Provincial Government Agent and the Conservation Officer until 1982 when construction of the new Provincial Building was completed. In 1987, the building was purchased then later sold to Quiniscoe Homes. The building has now been restored to its former glory.

9 THE CLELAND HOUSE

The Dobbie and Cartwright Construction Company constructed this building for the Cleland family in 1924. The family home was sold to Des Askey family in 1957. More recently the building housed "Myrtles", a shop named for Mrs. Askey and owned by her son Roger. In 1992, Mark Hendrickson, an architect, purchased and renovated the building. In recent years, this former home, has been a restaurant with different names.

10 CANADIAN IMPERIAL BANK OF COMMERCE

This building was constructed by Nat Bavin for the Imperial Bank in 1928. It originally had steps and an entrance off 7th Avenue. The latest renovations increased the size of the building to twice the original floor space and moved the entrance to 13th Street.

11 AVENUE A and MCKAY HOUSE

In 1910, Avenue A was a General Store owned by Messrs. Pitts and Hankey. Hankey went away to WWI while J.C. Pitts along with his daughter Gladys, continued to operate the business that included the Invermere Post Office. Mr. Pitts died in 1935 and his daughter continued to run the store and post office until 1954. The building was eventually purchased by Pat Bavin along with the McKay house.

The McKay house was built in 1911 for James Lorenzo McKay by Dave Bales. The house sat on the banks of the Columbia River in Athalmer till 1980 when it was moved behind Avenue A. It was opened in 1981, providing more space for shops and offices.

12 VILLAGE ARTS

Built in 1911, this building originally served as a hardware store, known as "Invermere Construction and Supplies Ltd.", and was owned by George Bennett and Frank Stockdale. In 1958 the building, after several owners, became a grocery store. Today it is operated by a group of artists and crafts people, providing an outlet for their work.

The building to the north, was constructed as a grocery store in 1912 by Mr. Goldie Stewart. In 1919, Stewart sold the store to Mr. A.E. Fisher of Fairmont. Renowned for his photography, Mr. Fisher sold groceries but specialized in cameras and film development. F.W. Hillier worked for Mr. Fisher in 1927 and purchased the business in 1946. In 1980, the Smith brothers restored the building and opened a gift shop.

13 DAVID THOMPSON AND CHARLOTTE SMALL STATUE and POT HOLE PARK

The statue of David Thompson and his wife, Charlotte Small, was erected in 2003 as a centennial project celebrating the opening of the valley and the pioneer families that followed. For more information on the statue see "On the Trail of David Thompson" tour.

The Pot Hole in the park is a natural formation. Often called a "Giant's kettle", such formations can be formed while the surface is covered by a glacier. Water produced through the melting of the glacier erodes rock and silt changing the earth's form and forcing underground streams and rivers to form. Colored water released in the "Pot Hole" has surfaced in Lake Dorothy!

