

1953 The Stratford Shakespeare Festival opened and the City of Stratford changed forever attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors from across North America and ultimately the City has hosted a million guests yearly.

In the 1960s The garden property was expanded by the acquisition of the woodland area providing our visitors with formal gardens and an environmental oasis.

1970 Woodland Garden receives donation of handsome gazebo.

2018-2019 A group of garden enthusiasts formed an organization, The Friends of Stratford's Shakespearean Garden. It was and is as the Friends go forward, a support group to the Board of Park Management in the Board's ongoing effort to maintain the historic garden here at Stratford. The Friends first supportive effort was the designing and publishing of the first ever visitors brochure for the garden in rich colours of red and gold.

In 2021 The Stratford and District Horticultural Society offered to donate a focal point urn at the end of the longpath.

In 2022 The Friends contributed the funds for fifty David Austen roses to completely renovate the rose garden.

In the winter of 2021/2022 For the first time ever an evening light show was installed in the garden by Lights On Stratford. It was delightful and the lights on *The Dufton Chimney* foreshadowed the Friends of the Shakespearean Garden proposed floodlighting of *The Dufton Chimney* in the future.

2022/2023 Perhaps the most significant donation will be the planting of over 100 peony clumps to be installed in 2023. This very generous contribution is a gift of the Canadian Peony Society who will be celebrating their 25th anniversary in 2023.

Published by

**Friends of the Stratford
Shakespearean Garden**
Suite 304, Park Towers
35 William St.
Stratford, Ontario Canada
N5A 4X9

Printed and designed by Stratford Business Centre

Stratford Shakespearean Gardens

Stratford, Ontario Canada • 1936

- Loreena McKennitt -
Patron of The Friends of the Garden

Photo by Kevin Petrie



The Dufton Woolen Mill Chimney Tower
survived the 1922 Mill fire to become a city landmark

Stratford's Shakespearean Garden with it's Dufton Chimney Tower

1870 The Dufton Woolen Mill was built on Huron Street along the Avon River

1878 Stratford Horticultural Society was formed.

1885 Stratford was incorporated as a city.

1904 Stratford's Board of Park Management is created

1910 *The Dufton Chimney* was built.

1917-1918 During this time as a staunch supporter of the park system, visionary R. T. Orr was mulling over another interesting project and that was a Shakespearean Garden for Stratford. Orr looked along the developing river and could not find an appropriate garden site.

1918 Swans were introduced to the Avon River system for the first time.

1919 The City of Stratford declared the Iris as our civic flower.

1922 While R. T. Orr Stratford's visionary pondered about an appropriate garden location which he could not find, fate intervened with a devastating fire at the Dufton Woollen Mill on Huron Street.

The property if it could be purchased was ideal. The property was along the Avon River and the handsome and imposing Perth County Court House was on the other side.

After the fire the Dufton family assessed their losses and decided not to rebuild. The 65' *Dufton Chimney* survived the fire.

- Loreena McKennitt -
Patron of The Friends of the Garden



When R. T. Orr heard about the Dufton decision he began lobbying city council friends to consider purchasing the property. When the sale price was announced, Stratford City Council balked at what they considered an exorbitant dollar figure. Unfortunately for the Duftons they did not receive any offers for the property and finally they agreed to the city's offer.

1925 The City of Stratford acquired the Dufton Mill Site.

R. T. Orr who was a historian and a architect by profession and a savvy business man surveyed the burnt out site and stored away most of undamaged handsome quarry stone. Then he sold much of the salvageable materials still on the site and those funds were returned to the city coffers thus reducing the city's cost of the property significantly.

1926-1927 Orr was pleased that the fire did not damage the factory chimney. As an architect he designed a handsome superstructure which contained bird boxes...a conical roof and topped with a weather vane.

During this time Orr travelled to Britain to find garden ideas and there he met the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Chairman Sir Archibald Flower who would later donate an urn for the garden.

1929 With all the exciting garden developments no one expected the financial crash of the twenties and the following depression. All building projects everywhere shut down for years and it would take 14 years for R.T. Orr's garden project to be realized.

In 1934 and 1935 Sensing an improved financial situation, R.T. Orr received City approval to restart the garden construction and as well at that time the City had contracted with Canada's celebrated landscape architects Dunnington, Grubb and Stenson to produce working blueprints for the garden site.

In 1936 the City of Stratford invited Canada's Governor General Lord Tweedsmuir and his wife to open the garden.

In 1937 The Province of Ontario designated the native trillium plant as the Province's official flower emblem.

1949 the Sons of England commissioned a handsome bust of William Shakespeare and it was installed in the rose garden with the Canadian sculptor Cleeve Horne in attendance.

Photo by Kevin Petrie

