Lethbridge City Driving Tour
This tour is written to start at Henderson Lake at the Japanese Gardens but we have made the tour so it goes a full circle so please start wherever works best for you. Also, please respect the rules of the road and private property as you conduct this tour. Enjoy.

Japanese Garden – 1967 Project of the Japanese Community of Lethbridge to commemorate the Centennial of Canada. It is an authentic design from Japan. Nikka Yuko stands for Japanese Canadian friendship. Rocks used in the design of the gardens were “rescued” from the riverbottom. The gardeners used only Canadian ornamentals because Japanese species were not adaptable to southern Alberta conditions. Specialists from the Brooks Horticultural Station and the Lethbridge Research Station aided in the selection of the plants.

Exit north bound onto Mayor Magrath Drive and turn left unto Parkside Drive South.

Henderson Lake – Built in 1912 for the Dryland Farming Congress, Henderson Lake was named for Mayor William Henderson, the only Lethbridge mayor to die while in office. Originally known as Slaughterhouse Slough, the city dammed the slough, built a footbridge near the west and, enlarged, leveled, and eventually concreted some of the shoreline. To encourage swimmers, the Rotary Club built an artificial beach while the city erected changing rooms. For some years, council maintained a small zoo which featured two bears in a pit and an eagle in a cage, but in 1915 the city shipped the bears back to Banff National Park – or so the authorities said! (Actually the bears were shot and skinned in the city.)

Turn left (northbound) onto 28th Street South. At the next corner turn right (eastbound) onto 6th Avenue South. Continue along to 34 Street South and turn left (northbound). 34 Street South will become Leaside Avenue South. As you drive along 6th Avenue South, Parkdale Subdivision is on your left.

Parkdale Subdivision – Leaside Avenue area. Most Lethbridge residents refer to it as Dieppe. The streets and avenues in this subdivision have been named for Second World War battles in which Canadians fought and died (Dieppe, Cassino, Ortona, Normandy, Falais, etc.)

Leaside Avenue South will turn into 2nd Avenue South. Turn left (northbound) onto 28th Street South and then right (east bound) onto Crowsnest Trail (Highway 3).

Alberta Terminal Elevator – Constructed between 1930 and 1931 at a cost of $900,000.00. Replacement cost today would be 60 million dollars. It was built under the auspices of the Federal Government by the firm of C.D. Howe using slip form construction, also known as ‘continuous pour construction’ the same method being used for concrete elevators today.

Continue along Crowsnest Trail until it divides into Highway 512. Take the right hand lane and drive east on Highway 512 (across 43 Street South) and east to the Research Centre and jail.

Canada Agricultural Centre – Founded in 1906, it was first called the Dominion Experimental Farm. The intent was to assist early settlers learn proper farming techniques in our western Canadian climate. 400 acres (160 hectares) of land were donated by Elliott
T. Galt. The present acreage is much larger. The first Superintendent was Wm. Harmon Fairfield who was persuaded by a brother to come to Lethbridge from his post in Laramie, Wyoming to operate what was know as The Model Farm a project of the Galt companies. It was virgin prairie when Fairfield took it over and in 1906 his salary was $1500 per year. Today it is the largest research station in Canada. (See also ‘Model Farm’)

Daniel Home – A historic home built in 1910 by Charles Roland Daniel now owned by a local architect. Called Norlund, it is a mail order house built from plans from a Lumberman’s Catalogue. The lumber was all pre-cut, numbered and shipped by freight to be assembled here. When built it had a built in vacuum system with length hoses for use on each floor. It was cumbersome to use so when electric vacuums came on the market one was purchased. The chandeliers were wired by electricity, but first run on acetylene gas before electricity was available. An early photograph shows the home set on five acres of land, alone in the middle of open land, with the caption, “A Farmer’s Home Near Lethbridge, Alta.” The photo was shown in Europe pre 1912 to promote immigration to Canada.

Lethbridge Correctional Institute – Originally built in 1911 it was replaced in 1983. Built as a Minimum Security Prison, in early years it had a candy factory which supplies other jails in Alberta. The adjacent farm land grew potatoes and other garden produce which was used in the jail kitchen with any surplus offered to Lethbridge merchants. There was a dairy, and poultry, hogs, and beef were raised. Local farmers objected to the institution competing in the market place and eventually the farm was shut down. The longest hunger strike in the history of Canada took place here in 1921. Captain Ernest Lloyd Jannay went on a hunger strike which lasted 43 days. Jannay was in prison for passing bad cheques.

Jail Lake – The body of water just west of the jail buildings is usually referred to as the Jail Lake, but its correct name is McLean Lake, named from the Honourable Archibald J. McLean. He served in the legislature and was one of the Big Four who started the Calgary Stampede. The lake was named in his honour but few Lethbridge residents are aware of it. A rural school about one mile east and a mile south was also called McLean School and the district is still considered McLean District by the locals. McLean died in October of 1933 and according to Alex Johnston a well-known local historian, his estate has never been settled. His wife had died in 1906 and an only son died in 1963 unmarried and childless.

Where you safely can, turn around and go back westward on Highway 512. When you get to 43rd Street South, turn left (southward).

Lethbridge & District Exhibition Grounds – (Looking from 43 Street South) Moved to this location for the International Dry Farming Congress of 1912. 5000 delegates came to the city for the congress. Two of the original barns are still in use. The main structures burnt down in 1925 and have been replaced.

At the intersection of Highway 4, turn right (westward). After you have turned, Fairmont subdivision will be on your left hand side.

Fairmont Subdivision – One of the city’s newest subdivisions, Fairmont was initially planned with a golf course, but the course didn’t materialize. However, a new Par Three course has been constructed a little to the north east. (Evergreen Golf Club)

Continue straight across Mayor Magrath Drive. One of the largest roads in Lethbridge, it was named for Lethbridge’s 1st mayor, Charles Magrath. Even though you have continued straight, the name of the road will change to Scenic Drive. The wind gauge is on your right in the parking lot of the Chinook Country Tourist Centre Visitor Information Centre.

The Wind Gauge – Lethbridge is fairly well known for its wind. A member of the Lethbridge Historical Society was working for the
Lethbridge Herald in his youth and one day while fighting one of our southwest gales to make deliveries he had an inspiration. In 1984 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the city moving out of the river valley to the prairie above, he followed through on his earlier idea. He is responsible for the design and erection of our ‘Wind Gauge.’ The ball came from Seattle brought by a local trucker who had made a delivery there. The Wind Gauge was first installed in 1985 near Sick’s Lethbridge Brewery. A time Capsule was placed under the gauge. When the highway was redesigned the Wind Gauge was moved to his new home. The Time Capsule was not moved.

Turn left onto 28th Street South (southward) and drive down to 32 Avenue.

Ideal Farm – 3202 28 Street South. This brick home was another house which was used on promotional material to encourage immigration to western Canada. It is not quite as lavish as the Daniel home but still was not an accurate representation. The house was built by David Whitney in 1903. He called his farm ‘The Ideal Farm’. On 24 May 2003, the owner opened its doors to the public as a 100th birthday celebration. It has been declared a Historic Site.

Model Farm – Another farm which was just south of the Ideal Farm was called the Model Farm. It was the precursor of the Dominion Experimental Farm, now the Canada Agriculture Centre. Wm. Harmon Fairfield was in charge of the Model Farm and major advances in agriculture were made there. Fairfield knew alfalfa was grown successfully in Wyoming, but for some reason it could not be grown in southern Alberta in 1904. Fairfield learned Alberta soil was lacking a bacteria called Rhysobium, so he had some soil sent from Wyoming and sprinkled it on his field at the Model Farm. With the introduction of the bacteria alfalfa would grow. After the first successful crop he took soil from his own field and inoculated other fields in the district until alfalfa could be grown at will. Only seven acres remain of the original Model Farm. The big box development occupies much of the area today.

Turn back around and go to 28 Avenue South. Turn left (westward onto 28 Avenue South past the soccer stadium. At College Drive South, turn right (northward) until you get to Scenic Drive. Turn left onto Scenic Drive (westward).

Enmax Centre, Community College and Soccer Stadium – Driving along Scenic Drive one can see the Enmax Centre, formerly called the Sportsplex, which was erected for the Canada Winter Games in 1973, and the nearby Soccer Stadium. Lethbridge has great sports facilities. The Lethbridge Community College is also close by. Begun as a Junior College in 1967, it has become a highly respected educational facility.

Scenic Drive – Originally built as exactly what its name implies, it was not intended to be a bypass road. In fact such use was discouraged. Unfortunately, development along the coulee edge has eliminated much of the scenic view, and this has not been without some problems brought on by the instability of the coulee rim. Now most people use it as a bypass road. It is a quick way to go downtown from the southeast corner. As the road curves along the edge of the coulees, occasionally you can see the University of Lethbridge on the west side of the river. It was designed by Arthur Erickson and was intended to reflect the line of the High Level Bridge. He purposely designed the building so as not to interfere with the coulee skyline. However, within a short time three high rises were built behind it.
**Mountain View Cemetery** – Along with St. Patrick’s Cemetery on the north side of town, this is one of the city’s main burial places. I don’t know if other cities have this regulation, but Lethbridge has a city bylaw prohibiting placing artificial flowers on the turf of graves between May and October. Artificial flowers must be held in an urn of some kind. Another interesting tidbit is that the point of land at the west end of the cemetery was the site of the Isolation Hospital from 1913 to 1924. As housing stopped at least six to eight blocks away at that time, it was certainly ‘isolated.’

**Galt Hospital** – You know you’ve been there a long time when you are the only building left on a road that doesn’t exist anymore! When the original Galt Hospital was built in 1891, it was built on Macleod Street, and the 2nd Galt Hospital, built just north of it was built in 1910 when Macleod Street was renamed 1st Street. The problem was that 1st Street was too close to the coulees and has since been removed. The Galt Hospital, now the site of the Galt Museum & Archives, is the only building left on a road that doesn't exist making it virtually impossible to find based on its street address. The Galt Hospital closed in 1955 and the Galt Museum & Archives inherited part of the building in 1964 and then the entire building in 1985. Currently undergoing an expansion, the Galt will reopen to the public in May 2006.

**Galt #8 Mine** – Across the river and slightly to the north are the remnants of the Galt #8 Mine. It was opened in 1935 and closed in 1957. There are still ten buildings on the property which are in excellent condition. The water tower is still in use for the concrete business on the site, and the head frame, while losing its cladding, is still in good condition. We have been told it is the best remnants of a mine in Canada. A dedicated group of citizens are working very hard to have the site declared a Historic Resource to protect it from demolition.

At 3rd Avenue South, turn left (westward) and follow the road down the coulee into Indian Battle Park.

**River Valley and Indian Battle Park** – Here Lethbridge began. Coal found in the valley is the very reason for our existence and is marked by a small kiosk. Two early residents are buried in the park. It was the site of the last great Inter-Tribal Indian Battle, hence its name. A replica of Fort Whoop-Up was constructed by the Kinsmen Club in 1967 as a Centennial Project and a Nature Centre is in the valley as well. The park is not a ‘manicured’ park as it is intended to show nature in its natural state.

**High Level Bridge** – Built in 1909, it is an engineering marvel still serving its intended purpose in spite of the difference in the size of the trains. Sometimes they reach from one side of the valley to the other. The bridge has never been upgraded, but it is frequently inspected. On a hill on the east side of the river, there is a rail which is said to have fallen during construction of the bridge. Truth or myth? Who knows. The CPR does not carry passengers over it any more except for a special tourist train which occasionally comes through Lethbridge. A new railway museum is being developed at Stirling south of Lethbridge and, who knows, perhaps trains will again carry passengers to that new venue.

As you come back out of Indian Battle Park, turn left (northbound) onto Scenic Drive.

**St. Patrick’s Cemetery** – As you continue along on Scenic Drive, you can just view St. Patrick’s Cemetery on your right hand side up on the coulee. The second oldest cemetery in Lethbridge (the oldest is in Indian Battle Park), St. Patrick’s was created in 1886. While the name would suggest a Catholic Cemetery, St. Patrick’s
has Chinese, Protestant, and Catholic areas. The area that you can see over the coulee is the area where unbaptized babies were buried outside of the cemetery proper.

As you continue driving on Scenic Drive it will turn eastward and become 9th Avenue North. Continue driving east on 9th Avenue North.

Staffordville – As Scenic Drive turns east and changes into 9th Avenue North you have entered into the Staffordville subdivision (west of 13th Street between 9th Avenue and 14th Avenue North). In 1890, the Galt company sunk the #3 shaft on the prairie level and the No. 3 coal mine was started. A settlement sprang up around the coal mine and, first known simply as “Number Three,” it became the Village of Stafford in 1900. Through a series of errors and bluffs, Staffordville was annexed by the City of Lethbridge in 1913. The name Stafford comes after William Stafford, superintendent of the mines.

Westminster Road and Adams Ice Rink – As you continue east along 9th Avenue North, you will come to 13th Street North, originally called Westminster Road, with the Adams Ice Rink located on the south east corner. Adams was named for Elias (Shorty) Adams, mayor of Lethbridge in 1910-1911, who stood six-feet-four. Westminster Road was named for the Westminster District of London, England, which was represented in Parliament from 1885 to about 1921 by William Lehman Ashmead Bartlett Burdett-Countts MP who, along with his wife Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts, were investors in the Galt companies. A bone of contention in the notorious south/north split of Lethbridge was that Westminster Road in the southern section is wider than Westminster Road in the north half of the city.

Galbraith School – (1801 8Avenue A North). The school opened on 7 February 1913 and used to be surrounded by open prairie. The school was named for Dr. Walter Stuart Galbraith, pioneer Lethbridge pharmacist and physician and one-time mayor (1907) of Lethbridge.

Continue along 9th Avenue North until 28 Street North. Turn right (southbound) on 28th Street North. The POW Camp would have been immediately to your left running a mile by a mile.

POW camp – Lethbridge was home to the largest Prisoner of War camp in Canada during World War II. Over 13,000 German prisoners occupied a camp a mile by a mile in what is now the industrial area of Lethbridge. Nothing but a marker and one building remains of this camp and, amazingly enough, few Lethbridge citizens realize it existed.

Turn left (westbound) from 28th Street North onto 5 Avenue North. At 23rd Street North, turn left (southbound). 23rd Street North will become North Mayor Magrath Drive. Continue south back to Henderson Lake.

Water Tower – Now home to a restaurant and bar, the water tower has long been a Lethbridge symbol. Once part of the city’s water delivery system, the tower stood empty for quite a while.