

Winter
2020



TRAIL MARKINGS

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Not Your Normal End-to-End

By Geoff Bell

Many GVTA members will have completed an end-to-end hike of the Grand Valley Trail or other trails like the Bruce. Usually end-to-ends are accomplished through a series of two- or three-day week-end hikes over a number of months.

This past summer, an end-to-end 'hike' of the Grand Valley Trail was completed in a sizzling 3 days, 11 hours, 56 minutes and 15 seconds by ultra runner, Jamieson Hatt. He started on June 28 and completed the end-to-end on Canada Day, July 1. It was his second attempt at completing a self-supported traverse of the trail, which he did in a north to south direction. Mr. Hatt started the end-to-end with a companion, who had to withdraw at the end of the third day because of injury.

Mr. Hatt's feat was acknowledged and congratulated by the GVTA, and he was provided with the end-to-end badge and GVT crest. He has been invited to attend the Association's annual festive dinner on December 8, where members can hear more details of this outstanding achievement.

Join us for the Annual Festive Dinner



at Rockway Golf Club

Sunday, December 8



Tickets: www.gvta.on.ca

President's Message

I hope you were able to enjoy some fall hiking and take in some of the fall colours. The Board undertook a range of different activities this fall:

Held first family hike

We are pleased that the GVTA offered its first family hike in October. The hike proved to be very successful and enjoyed by all. Eighteen children between the ages of 2 to 11 and averaging 6 ½ years old, were accompanied by one or both parents for the hike. Hike leaders Laura Anders led the Tortoise group and Kevin Kennedy led the Hare group in the beautiful Natchez Park area trail.

Encouraged by the participants' enthusiasm, we organized another family hike in November. At time of printing, the hike had not taken place however, we know for sure that warmer gear will be required for the November hike! Thanks to all members who helped make the event a success. A great time was had by all - check out the photo of our hikers below!

Refreshed GVTA website

We have been talking about the need to refresh our website. Well the work has now been completed and came to fruition on November 8 when the improved website was launched.

If you have visited gvta.on.ca since that time, you will have noticed a few things:

- There is no longer a newsletter sign-up area. The newsletter is sent to all members unless they have explicitly asked to be removed from the mailing list, so no need to sign up!
- The members' only area has been removed. This area was largely out of date and seldom used by members. Since all the content on the site is meant for the members, there is no need for a distinct member section.
- The site is now mobile friendly – so go ahead and visit gvta.on.ca on any of your smart devices!
- All the pages look different: new menus, headers, images, layout.
- Finally, the content is updated and organized differently under the new menu. The intent was to make finding the content more intuitive for you.

As with everything we do, we do our best ... but we may have missed the mark on something. If you can no longer find what you were looking for or have comments or suggestions, please email me at president@gvta.on.ca.

Introducing new webmaster

With a new website comes a new webmaster! Jane Wilson who has been our webmaster for several years gave us notice of her pending resignation some time ago and kindly offered to continue working to get the website ready for launch. Jane officially resigned earlier this fall and passed the baton to a brand new volunteer with the club, Matthew Hodge. Matthew is a life-long member of the club. He is based in Toronto but is very familiar with the trail and the area. He is a busy medical professional who likes to hike and work with technology. He is self-taught and has managed different sites on a volunteer basis for various medical professional organizations and physician groups. Matthew assumed this new role a few weeks before the website change so his start in the new role was definitely a trial by fire. A warm welcome and a big thank you to Matthew! Matthew can be reached at webmaster@gvta.on.ca.

Hike Ontario award recipient

Congratulations to Jane Wilson for being a recipient this year of Hike Ontario's Volunteer of the Year Award. Jane has been a member of the Grand Valley Trails Association since 1989 and the club's webmaster for the past four years. Her proficiency with the different online tools and software, her diligence and attention to detail in the management of the website content have been very much appreciated over the years. The association is very grateful to Jane for her commitment and dedication to quality and accurate information on the web and for the overall effective management of the site. Thank you, Jane!

Festive dinner

Our festive dinner is held on Sunday, December 8 at the Rockway Golf Club in Kitchener. I hope to see many of you at the dinner. I also take this opportunity to wish you and your family a healthy and joyful holiday season!

— Annie Côté-Kennedy

GVTA's Future Hike Leaders?



Eighteen young hikers, between the ages of 2 and 11, accompanied by their parents, participated in the GVTA's first family hike held in October at Natchez Park. Some of the Tortoise hikers (above) tested out the park bench at the end of their hike while members of the Hare group (below) took a mid-hike break!



Photos by Annie Côté-Kennedy.

GVTA Board Meetings

Upcoming meetings:

- Tuesday, January 14
- Tuesday, February 11
- Tuesday, March 10

**Location: Allan Reuter Centre
507 King St. E. (in Preston)
Cambridge, ON N3H 3N4**

Time: 7:00 PM

For a list of current board members and open positions, see www.gvta.on.ca.

Editor's Message

It has been a real pleasure to work on this newsletter for the past two years. Thank you for submitting articles and photos to the newsletter. Thanks especially to Geoff Bell, Janet Feller, Jane Wilson, Chris Kaczynski, Emily Bennet, and Laura Anders for all their help over the last two years.

This is my last issue as editor as I start a busy new job in December 2019.

In related news, we are looking for an editor and e-newsletter volunteer! Email Emily at volunteering@gvta.on.ca if interested. (I am happy to share all my trade secrets (such as they are). Also, I can highly recommend the coworkers.

Best,

Madeline Rosamond

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THE CAMINO DE SANTIAGO, SPAIN

April 26 to May 8, 2020

The Camino de Santiago is an iconic trek covering some 800km across the north of Spain. Our journey encompasses the last 160km from O'Cebreiro to Santiago de Compostela, including many "extras" in order to make it a complete Galician experience. Thousands of pilgrims have walked before us, and it is time to add your footsteps to this famous trail.

JAPAN - TOKYO TO KYOTO

October 4 to 18, 2020

Traditional customs intertwined with modern realities! Discover hiking trails from Tokyo to Kyoto, including treks in Kamikochi (Japanese Alps), on the slopes of Mt. Fuji & the Five Lakes District. Explore Matsumoto, Takayama, & Japan's first capital, Nara. Accommodations include western-style hotels & traditional Japanese ryokans. Peak time for fall colours!

2020 HIKING CALENDAR

Email us at info@letshike.com to receive the much-anticipated Comfortable Hiking Holidays annual Hiking Calendar, full of inspirational trips to entice you for months to come!

LAST MINUTE?

If you prefer to wait until the last minute to plan a trip or if you're a spur of the moment kind of person, then add your name to one of our waitlists and we will contact you if/when an opening becomes available.

**Dominica * Portugal * Amalfi Coast (Italy) * Ireland
Corfu (Greece) * Provence & Cote d'Azur (France)
Slovenija * Tour du Mont Blanc
Galapagos Islands**

EARN HIKING BUDDY REWARDS

Did you know we have a referral program? Tell all your hiking friends what a great time you had on your trip with Comfortable Hiking Holidays, and if they have never travelled with us before and decide to book one of our trips, you will receive a \$100 discount on your next Comfortable Hiking Holiday. Since its launch in 2006, we have awarded almost \$38,000 in Hiking Buddy Rewards! We admit, we love it when you rave about us!

TICO # 50018498

About Trail Markings

Submissions (Please submit electronically before issue deadlines)

Content Articles: Managing Editor,
newsletter@gvta.on.ca

Advertising: Advertising Coordinator,
advertising@gvta.on.ca

Scheduled Hikes, Work Parties, Other Outdoor Activities: Hike Coordinator, hikes@gvta.on.ca

(If you have not submitted before, please contact hikes@gvta.on.ca for formatting instructions)

Deadline Dates for Publication

February 5, May 5, August 5, November 5

Advertisement Rates and Inquiries

Contact the Advertising Coordinator,
advertising@gvta.on.ca

Reporting Errors and Omissions

Please report to the Managing Editor,
newsletter@gvta.on.ca

Advertising notices appear for the convenience of members and advertisers. The Grand Valley Trails Association accepts no responsibility in connection with these notices.

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The Crossing Trek 2020

#TrekWithUs on February 8
to raise awareness about the risks of
exposure for homeless citizens and
raise funds for The Working Centre

Trek registration is now open
www.WaterlooRegionCrossing.com

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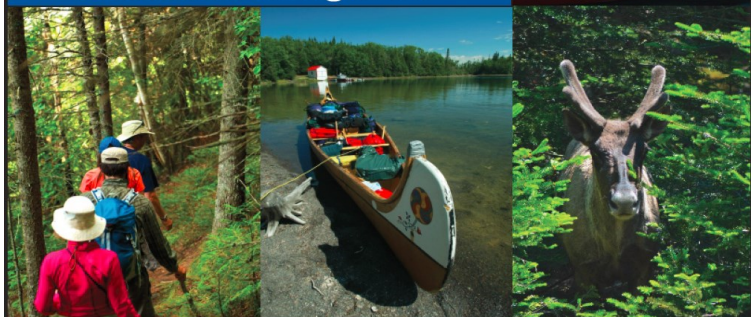
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DOTTING THE "I"s—Iceland & Ireland 2020

Two of the most "i"conic destinations combine in this fascinating tour with Walkaway Treks as Charles Whitlock explores Iceland and Ireland May 9 to 20, 2020. Our tour visits Reykjavik, Village Vik, Galway, Killarney, Cork and Dublin. Excellent walks and touring compliment a fully guided, very special tour. Per person to / to Toronto CAD \$4,765. Full details at:

<http://www.worldwide.on.ca/iceland-ireland2020>

Updates on our special tours through 2020 / 2022. Space on all these unique tour programs is VERY limited and based on first come, first served basis.

SICILY, MALTA & GOZO: October 2 to 16, 2020: **ONLY 1 TWIN ROOM REMAINING !!** Singles sold-out

MOROCCO: April 9 to 21, 2021—wait-list only: <http://worldwide.on.ca/morocco2021>

ANDALUSIA: April 20 to 30, 2021 — space is limited: <http://worldwide.on.ca/andalusia2021>

Pre-registrations (the best way to get on our tours!) are open for the following tours:

MOLDOVA & ROMANIA: Fall 2021

RHODES & CRETE: Spring 2022

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The Geological History of the Grand River: Common Fossils, Part 2

By Madeline Rosamond

Limestone, dolostone, and shale in this watershed can be great sources of fossils. Fossils can be found in bedrock outcrops, but they are often easier to find by picking up rocks on beaches, by the river, or in old gravel pits. Fossils in the Grand River watershed are most often from the Silurian (444—419 million years ago) period though later Devonian fossils are found in the south. Earlier Ordovician fossils may be found in glacial till or beach stones.

Stromatolites: One of the earliest life-forms, these are mats made up of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) and mud, which show as “onion-skin” layered shapes in rocks. Stromatolites are quite rare today, most famously found in Shark’s Bay, Australia. Stromatolite fossils are on display at the Lover’s Leap lookout in Elora—look at the stone wall.

Trilobites: Possibly my favourite fossil; these extinct marine arthropods looked a lot like giant pill bugs. They moulted their exoskeletons, so it’s relatively common to find their lower halves where the skeleton split. A whole trilobite is a great find! I haven’t found very many in the Grand River watershed, but the Craigeith formation near Collingwood and the Whitby Shale east of Toronto are better bets.



Above: Stromatolite fossils showing characteristic layered round shapes that often look like onion skins. Seen on the GVTA trail at Lover’s Leap, Elora. Image by the author.

Below: Trilobite “butts” from the Whitby Shale. (Note also the brachiopod fossils from last issue.) Image by Reddit user geoscientist1971.



Species of Interest in the Grand River Watershed: Barred Owl

By Madeline Rosamond

Barred owls (*Strix varia*) are a relatively common species here in southern Ontario. You have likely heard their call at night, which is often transcribed as “Who cooks for you? Who cooks for yoo-ooou?” They also have elaborate courtship sounds described as “maniacal laughter.”

Barred owls do not migrate and may be seen in winter, especially at twilight. However, they can be difficult to spot because of their camouflage and because they fly silently. They have distinctive dark eyes, a pale breast streaked with dark brown, darker brown wings and tail with white bars, and often a brown ring around their faces.

Barrel owls prefer swamps and mature forests and nest in cavities created by pileated woodpeckers, or left vacant by squirrels or other raptors. They eat small mammals (mice, chipmunks, even rabbits), insects, amphibians, and snakes. Keep an ear out for their call on your next winter hike. You may even see an owl pellet on the snow.



Barred owl, showing barred wings and tail. Image from Wikimedia Commons.

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- Hike along marked trails only
- Use stiles; do not climb fences
- Leave the trail cleaner than you found it; carry out all litter
- No camping or fires permitted
- Leave flowers/plants for others to enjoy
- Do not damage live trees or strip bark
- Protect and do not disturb wildlife
- Leave nothing but thanks and take nothing but photographs
- Use trails at your own risk
- Walk around the edge of fields
- Keep dogs leashed
- No motorized vehicles, bicycles or horses except where permitted by sign posting
- Close all farm gates
- Obey all signage

SUSQUEHANNOCK LODGE and TRAIL CENTRE Hiking in the Highlands of North Central Pennsylvania



NEW YEARS - Dec. 28, 29, 30, 2019, Jan 1, 2020

Snow – we will snowshoe, cross country ski.
No snow we hike.

EASTER - April 10, 11, 12, 13, 2020

Welcome spring on the trails and a Polish Easter Dinner.

The Lodge is located in Potter County, Pennsylvania, 2.5 hours south of Buffalo. There is no agriculture or industry in the area, just great trails. Daily hikes of 10 to 15 km are led through hardwood forest, many beside mountain streams. Our lodge provides comfortable accommodation & excellent meals for \$75.00 semi-private, \$80.00 private-double occupancy, \$90.00 private-single occupancy, USD per day per person. These outings have proven to be popular with the lodge filling quickly.

For more information, including driving directions, please see hikevincent.wordpress.com or contact Greg Vincent at 519-579-8210 or vincent.greg@gmail.com

For reservations call Carol Szymanik at 1-814-435-2163

Great Gifts: GVTA Apparel, Etc.

T-shirts, short sleeved and navy blue — women's S/M/L/XL and men's M/L/XL. For styling and sizing information, please visit www.gvta.on.ca/Store.htm.

GVTA Hats - one size - \$10.50

GVTA Guidebooks - \$15 + \$6 shipping (or contact Jan Hember, 519-745-1375, to pick up your copy). Guidebooks require a 6" X 9" binder, which can be purchased at your local office supply store.

Hikes and Events

By Georgia Mulholland

♦ denotes Independent Outings, possibly without Certified Hike Leader.

The GVTA accepts no responsibility for notices identified as Independent Outings (♦). These notices appear for the convenience of members.

Last-Minute Hikes

or last minute weather changes

Check the GVTA website:

www.gvta.on.ca

December Hikes

Sunday, December 1, 2019: Victorian Christmas at Woodside National Historic Site, the Grounds and Springwood Park.

Level 1 (easy) 3km - stroll through Spring Valley Park and Woodside National Historic Site grounds - 3 hours

Leader(s): Jeanette & Greg Vincent,

vincent.greg@gmail.com

Depart: Meet for a 10:30 a.m. start at Woodside National Historic Site. 528 Wellington St. N., Kitchener, ON N2H 5L5.

We will enjoy a walk at Springwood Park and the beautiful grounds of Woodside, the childhood home of William Lyon Mackenzie King, Canada's 10th and longest serving prime minister.

Followed by a visit inside for a self-guided tour of the charming Victorian home filled with heirlooms from the King family and period reproduction pieces that capture the ambiance of the era and savour the seasonal delights of a Victorian Christmas. Fee: adults: \$3.90; seniors \$3.40, 17 & under - free.

Sunday, December 7, 2019: Iron Horse & Spurline Trail Loop followed by a visit to Christkindl Market

Level 1 (easy) 9km Loop Hike - 3 hours

Leader(s): Jeanette & Greg Vincent,

vincent.greg@gmail.com

Depart: Meet for a 10 a.m. departure from Victoria Park Pavilion parking lot at 80 Schneider Ave., Kitchener.

We will walk from Victoria Park to Waterloo using the Iron Horse & Spurline trails followed by a visit to Christkindl Market at Kitchener City Hall. There will be some city streets to complete the loop and a short detour on the Iron Horse trail. Be prepared for possible winter weather conditions; icers are recommended.

Saturday, Dec 14, 2019: Huron Natural Area, Kitchener

Level 1 (easy), terrain is mostly flat. 6 km, moderate pace: 4 km/hr, about 1.5 hours.

Leader(s): Didier Thevenard, 519-888-0894 (h), 519-497-9387 (m) or

didier.j.thevenard@gmail.com

Depart: 9:00 a.m. from 801 Trillium Drive, Kitchener parking lot (GPS 43.398635, -80.481699). Please carpool with a friend if you can as the parking lot has a limited capacity.

We will explore the easy trails that crisscross the Huron Natural Area, enjoy its streams, wetlands, pond, and lookout areas. Wear walking shoes and bring some water and a snack if you wish. This is an easy hike suitable for all abilities (except if there is snow/ice).

Saturday, December 26, 2019: Holiday Lights in Old Westmount: A Boxing Day Walkabout

Level 1 (easy).

Leader(s): Janice Bock, traveljb2014@gmail.com

Depart: 7:00 p.m. from 725 Belmont Ave. W, Kitchener in BELMONT VILLAGE in Parking Lot beside Raja Indian Restaurant.

This is an evening hike, on Dec. 26, walking the sidewalks of Old Westmount to admire holiday lighting at various residences. Camaraderie and visual delights are guaranteed on this evening walkabout. Distance is 2-5 km and walking will be in a figure eight so there is a way to drop out early. Bring a camera and dress for the weather. Just show up for the 7 p.m. start led by Janice.

January Hikes

Sunday, January 5, 2020: St. Jacobs Mill Race Track & Health Valley Trail

Level 1-2 (easy/moderate) - 7-8 km there and back - 3 hours

Leader(s): Jeanette & Greg Vincent

vincent.greg@gmail.com

Depart: Meet for a 10 a.m. departure from Health Valley Trailhead located at east end of Municipal Parking lot off Albert St., St. Jacobs.

We will walk some of the Health Valley Trail, a lovely flat trail heading east along the Conestoga River out of the town of St. Jacobs and back, then continue west on the Millrace Footpath to the dam and back.

The footpath follows an 1860's vintage millrace that was constructed alongside the Conestoga River to serve the power needs of a gristmill in the Village of St. Jacobs. Be prepared for winter

weather conditions; icers are recommended.

Sunday, January 12, 2020: St. Jacob's Mill Run

Level 1-2 (easy) - About 3 km, easy pace 3 km/hr, about 1 hour

Leader(s): Didier Thevenard, 519-888-0894 (h), 519-497-9387 (m) or

didier.j.thevenard@gmail.com

Depart: 2:00 p.m., at the parking lot near the intersection of Front St. and Isabella St., St. Jacobs (GPS: 43.540785, -80.555891). Directions: Aim for St. Jacobs; once in the village, take Front St. in front of the Mill, and go to the end (about 150 m). The parking lot will be on your right.

This is an easy family outing simply to enjoy the winter scenery and the views of the Conestoga River in winter. We will follow the Mill Race Trail (<https://bit.ly/2nfA9pG>) from St. Jacobs to the dam at Three Bridges Road, and back. This is just an excuse to get a bit of fresh air, catch sight of a few birds and enjoy the trail. Bring warm clothes including good hiking or winter boots, winter jacket, hat and gloves.

February Hikes

Sunday, February 9, 2020: Snowshoeing at Shade's Mill, Cambridge

Level 1-2 (easy/moderate) – 4-6 km, depending upon the abilities of participants; about 2 hours

Leader(s): Didier Thevenard, 519-888-0894 (h), 519-497-9387 (m) or

didier.j.thevenard@gmail.com

Depart: 10:00 a.m. at the rental hut, Shades Mills' Park, 450 Avenue Road, Cambridge, ON (ask at the park entrance for directions to the

rental hut). Park admission required, \$7. Directions from Kitchener: take the 401 toward Toronto. Take the Regional Road 36/Franklin Boulevard exit toward Cambridge. Drive South on RR 36/Franklin Boulevard for about 3.6 km, then turn left on Avenue Road. After 750 m you will arrive at Shade's Mills Park, which will be on your right.

This outing will be contingent upon having favourable weather and snow conditions. We will do a bit of snowshoeing on one of the many trails that the park has to offer. Bring warm clothes including good hiking or winter boots, winter jacket, hat and gloves, and your own snowshoes if you have any (if not, rental of snowshoes is available at the park at the cost of \$11).

Friday to Monday, February 14-17, 2020: Family Day Snowshoe Weekend in Tobermory

Leader(s): Jeanette & Greg Vincent, vincent.greg@gmail.com

Celebrate with a weekend trip snowshoeing the trails of the National Park at the "Tip o' the Bruce" Tobermory. We arrive Friday, February 14th at our comfortable hotel overlooking Little Tub Harbour where we stay and have our meals for three nights at the Princess Hotel in Tobermory.

Please call the Princess for rates and a reservation 1-877-901-8282 or info@tobermoryprincesshotel.com and mention Greg Vincent's snowshoe weekend when booking. This outing is restricted to those staying with us at the Princess.

Welcome, New Members!

Aug. 1—Oct. 31, 2019

Baker, Brian

Booth, Danielle

Fullerton, Anne

O'Brien, Kevin

Wray, Wanda

Photos From the Trail



An emergency fix: duct-taped boots on a hike in Ireland. Image by Petra Suffling.



A caterpillar spied on the Dryden Tract trail near Cambridge. Image by Darren LeBlanc.

Trail Markings Volunteers

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newsletter@gvta.on.ca

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hikes@gvta.on.ca

Electronic Newsletter
Matthew Hodge

Proofers and Printing Help
Geoff Bell, Janet Feller



Left: A holiday tree seen on the Westmount Night Hike in December 2018. Check out the Hikes pages for this year's event! Photo by Janice Bock.

Right: Participants in the 2019 Crossing Trek, which raises funds for The Working Centre. To get involved in 2020, see page 5. Photo by Samuel Coons.



Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

Grand Valley Trails Association

PO Box 40068, Waterloo, ON N2J 4V1

