

# Going to the Chapel Route (Dundas)

## OVERVIEW

I hiked this in-and-out route on a beautiful mid-July day and loved every minute of it. It is a true escarpment adventure. Beginning in the 72ha Rock Chapel Sanctuary, you follow the Bruce Trail along a south-facing escarpment edge. Then you descend before climbing back up the escarpment where the lovely Tew's Falls and views from Dundas Peak are your reward. Then back to our starting point in "the Chapel."

I kept running into a group of people who were clearly on an adventure of their own. I initially thought it was a scavenger hunt or rally of some sort. It became clear what was going on when I arrived at Dundas Peak in time to witness the marriage proposal that was the culmination of their adventure. Evidently, the groom-to-be had set up their elaborate journey to this beautiful spot. He has truly raised the bar for awesome proposal ideas. Best wishes to the lovely couple on their next great adventure. I promised to send them a copy of this book as a wedding present.

*"Feet on a trail...the best antidote  
to eyes on a computer screen."*

GORD HANDLEY



## Insider Info

### LENGTH

12.3 kilometres

### LEVEL OF DIFFICULTY

Challenging



### LENGTH OF TIME

3 to 4.5 hours

% ON ROAD 20%

### HIGHLIGHTS

Escarpment ecosystem, Dundas Peak, Tew's Falls, amazing views, marriage proposals

### PLACES TO EAT/DRINK

In Dundas: Detour Café, Dutch Mill Country Market, Dymont's Market & Bakery (closed in winter), grupetto, Morden's Organic Farm Store (closed Sunday), Picone Fine Food (closed Sunday)

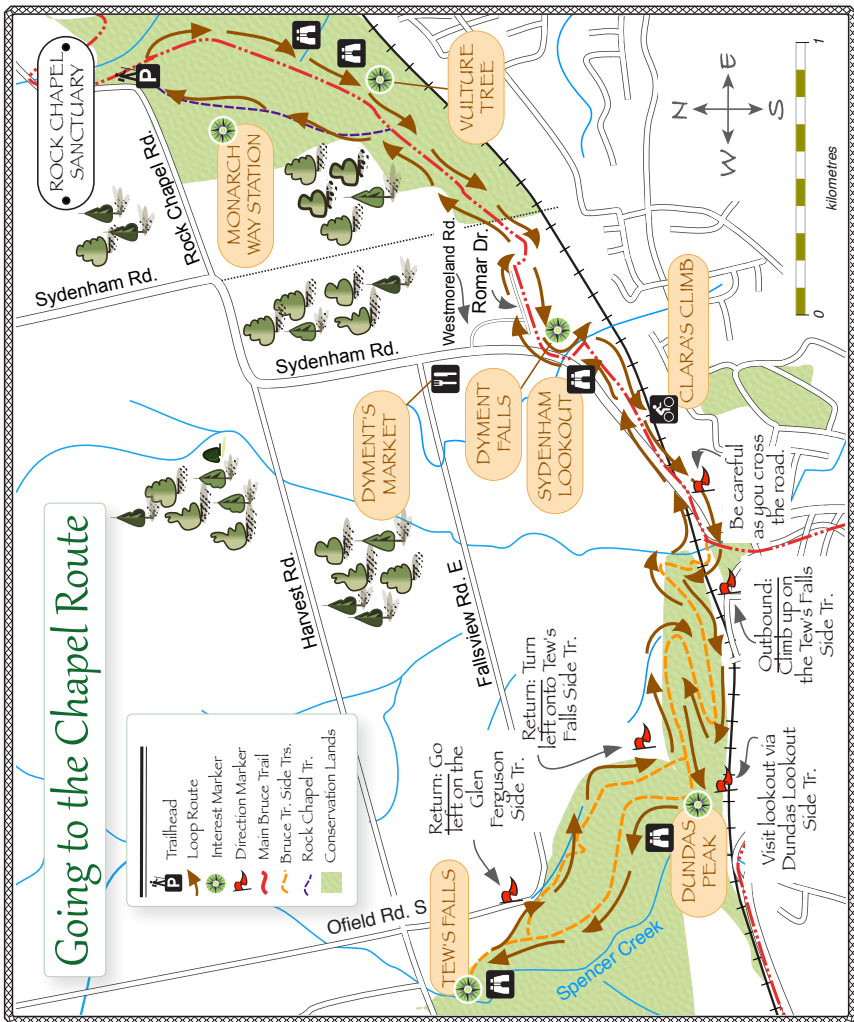
### ENTRANCE FEE

\$1.00/hour to a maximum of \$5.00

### TRAILHEAD

N43° 17.435' W79° 56.216'





## Directions

1. Park in the Rock Chapel Sanctuary lot on the south side of Rock Chapel Rd., east of Sydenham Rd. Rock Chapel was named for a wooden church built in 1822 on a ledge of solid rock that juts out from the escarpment and overlooks the Dundas Valley.
2. Follow signs for the Escarpment Tr. and the main Bruce Tr. to find the trailhead. When facing away from the road it's to your left.



3. Marked with the main Bruce Tr.'s white blazes, the trail passes through a small meadow before a path veers left to a lookout and your first great vista.
4. Return to the main Bruce Tr. and turn left, following the trail as it skirts the edge of the escarpment through primarily deciduous forest.
5. Look for an old, stone sugar shack; a lookout platform; and a pavilion.
6. Pass by both the Armstrong Tr. and the Rock Chapel Tr.
7. I happened upon 2 turkey vultures perched on a dead tree along here. Wings outstretched, they were warming themselves in the morning sun. Growing up as I did in the lee of the Niagara Escarpment's cliffs, turkey vultures were a common and welcome sight. Their Latin name, *Cathartes aura*, loosely translates to "cleansing breeze" and refers to their graceful flight as they soar overhead, riding thermals while in search of carrion. They can drift for hours without a single flap of their huge wings. They live in Ontario from March until the cold drives them as far south as South America.
8. You arrive at the end of Romar Dr., where you pass through the chain-link pedestrian access and follow Romar Dr. Walk on this road, past the intersection with Westmoreland Rd., all the while keeping an eye out for those white blazes.
9. Where Romar Dr. dead-ends, continue onto a small footpath that leads to Sydenham Rd., where you go left along the left side of this road.



*Turkey vultures sunbathe to warm up, dry their feathers and rid themselves of external parasites.*



10. In about 80m, there are stairs going down to the left. Before heading down them, walk along to the Sydenham Lookout Side Tr. and take it for yet another great view.

11. Return to the stairs and the main Bruce Tr.'s white blazes. As you walk down the stairs, look to your left for the 16m-high Dyment Falls, which were named after the Dyment family, who farmed here for generations. You will get a closer look at their farm later.



*Cliffs like this one are beautiful,  
but stay safe and enjoy them from a distance.*

12. The trail continues to descend a series of stairs. Then it follows a narrow, rocky path complete with poison ivy. So stay to the centre of the path.

13. You can see some shaggy-barked hop hornbeam trees along this section, so called because their fruit clusters look like the hops that are used in beer-making.

14. The trail, which is still the main Bruce Tr., follows Sydenham Rd. and crosses a bridge over train tracks. Olympic cyclist and speed skater, Clara Hughes, trained on this steep section of Sydenham Rd. in the 1990s.

15. Cross Sydenham Rd, following the white blazes. Use caution, it's a busy road.

16. Walk around a metal guardrail and turn left to arrive at the Tew's Falls Side Tr. Follow it and its blue blazes as it goes up and up, and then up again.

17. Pass by the Glen Ferguson Side Tr., but take a peek at the stunning view from the oftentimes busy lookout that you access via the Dundas Lookout Side Tr.

18. Return to the Tew's Falls Side Tr. and turn left.

19. Continue to follow the blue blazes across a wooden bridge. There are some risky, unauthorized trails leading toward the escarpment edge along here. Please stay on the marked trail as just ahead is a proper lookout platform with a sweeping view of the Dundas Valley

20. Pass a second intersection with the Glen Ferguson Side Tr. and continue straight on the Tew's Falls Side Tr. Cross over a wooden bridge.







*At 41m high, Tew's Falls is the highest in the region.*

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21. Along this trail you will find 2 viewing platforms for Tew's Falls. Visit both, then retrace your steps to the most recent intersection with the Glen Ferguson Side Tr., where you turn left.
22. Follow the blue blazes of the Glen Ferguson Side Tr. for approximately 900m, until it loops back to the Tew's Falls Side Tr.
23. Turn left to go back onto the Tew's Falls Side Tr. Follow it back to the main Bruce Tr., where you turn left and follow it back to Sydenham Rd.
24. Carefully cross Sydenham Rd. once again and turn left to retrace your steps, this time up the steep hill. Now it's your Clara Hughes moment, albeit she was on a bike rather than a hike.
25. The main Bruce Tr. leaves the road and then it rejoins Sydenham Rd., before arriving once again at the footpath leading you back to Romar Dr. Now is your chance to visit Dymment's Market & Bakery (open Easter to December) as a reward for your Olympic performance. To get there, continue along Sydenham Rd. for another 450m. Dymment's is at the corner of Sydenham Rd. and Fallsvie Rd. E.
26. Once fortified with, I suggest, butter tarts, return to the footpath/main Bruce Tr., and continue to Romar Dr., following white blazes and Bruce Tr. signs.
27. Walk along Romar Dr. to the trail access point at its end. Pick up the trail, which is still the main Bruce Tr., and follow it to the Rock Chapel Tr.
28. This time, turn left onto the Rock Chapel Tr.
29. It leads through a beautiful meadow. Rich with milkweed, teasel and grasses, this meadow was aflutter with butterflies. Although I didn't see any monarchs, this spot is registered as a monarch way station where these majestic Lepidoptera can feed.
30. Follow this trail back to the parking lot and your car.



*Milkweed's fluffy seeds were used to stuff flotation devices during WWII.*

