



Heritage Trail



# Northern Suburbs

Around the Kaiwharawhara Basin



Part 1

**Absolutely**

**POSITIVELY**

ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE  
WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL

**Wellington**

## Northern Suburbs Heritage Trail

# Wellington City

This is Part 1 of a two part trail. Part 2 is contained in a separate booklet. This part of the trail will take two to three hours to drive. There is some walking involved as well but it is of a generally easy nature. It features the southern suburbs - Kaiwharawhara, Ngaio, Crofton Downs, Wilton and Wadestown - that largely surround and overlook the Kaiwharawhara Stream. Part 2 follows the Old Porirua Road through Ngaio, Khandallah and Johnsonville, Glenside and Tawa with deviations to Ohariu, Grenada Village, Paparangi and Newlands. The trail finishes at Ngauranga.

## Main features of the trail

**Bridle Track**

**Kaiwharawhara Magazine**

**Crofton**

**Wellington–Manawatu Railway (Johnsonville Line)**

**Wilton House**

**Panels describing the history of the major centres**

## Key



Registered as a historic place by the New Zealand Historic Places Trust / Pouhere Taonga



Listed as a heritage item in the Wellington City District Plan



## Introduction

"The entrance into Wellington by this road is singularly beautiful. As you wind round the sides of the rocky spurs, beneath gigantic boughs and luxuriant foliage, you obtain peeps of the velvet woods of the Valley of Kai Wara Wara and its tributaries; then a view of the western faces of Wade's Town, with its cottages and bright green gardens; and lastly, the wide expanse of Port Nicholson, with its ships, peaked mountains, and glistening town."

*Edward Jerningham Wakefield describing travelling into Wellington on the Old Porirua Road in 1845.*

This trail takes you on a walking and driving tour of the heritage of Wellington's northern suburbs, covering that part of Wellington from the north and west flanks of Tinakori Hill inland from the harbour as far north as Tawa. It includes the suburbs or settlements of Wadestown, Wilton, Kaiwharawhara, Crofton Downs, Ngaio, Khandallah, Johnsonville, Newlands, Paparangi, Glenside, Grenada Village, Ohariu and Tawa.

The trail takes you along roads that link the suburbs both geographically and historically. Many of these were once Maori tracks, packtracks, or horse and cart roads; some have changed relatively little since they were first constructed. You will see sites of Maori settlement, of Wellington's earliest industries and farms, historic houses, and one of New Zealand's most interesting stretches of railway. Settlement of these areas was based on the 100 acres ballotted to each settler by the New Zealand Company in the early 1840s. It is still possible to see how the subdivision of this land has shaped the suburbs of today.

## Northern Suburbs

The landscape has changed dramatically over time. In 1840 it was covered in thick bush, interrupted only by small areas of Maori cultivation and walking tracks. Within 30 years virtually no forest cover remained. Now only one substantial area of original native bush is left in the whole of Wellington City – in Otari-Wilton's Bush – and its survival is due to the foresight of a settler family, the Wiltons. Regeneration has softened the once denuded landscape and this has been further enhanced by the 'greening' of public recreational areas.

The key to the development of these suburbs was transport and communication, in particular the role of the road and railway, best exemplified by the Porirua Road and the early sections of the Wellington-Manawatu Railway, both of which – more or less – survive to this day. Without such essential corridors of communication the suburbs that are the subject of this trail would never have evolved in the manner they have. For all that, it was not until the major subdivisions of the 1920s that transport had improved sufficiently to attract large numbers of prospective home owners. The provision of railway and state houses from the 1920s also brought worker housing to the district. Today the northern suburbs still accommodate a diverse population with varying incomes and lifestyles.

## The New Zealand Company and Maori reserves

The New Zealand Company was established in London in 1838. Its intention was to offer systematic settlement of New Zealand to eager prospective emigrants and, through land sales, make a handsome profit. At the same time that the British Government was considering annexing New Zealand, the company was planning its first settlement at Wellington. The company's first ship, *Tory*, arrived in 1839 and more followed the following year.

The company intended to ballot 100 one-acre town sections and, later, 1000 one-hundred acre country sections to all settlers. Successful balloters were to get one town acre and 100 country acres. Maori were paid for the land in money and goods and were also to receive a tenth of the allocation (as a response to the British Government's wishes). However they were not given existing pa, cultivations and access to kaimoana (seafood), which were instead included in the general land pool. Maori were allocated 1200 acres of scattered blocks, including some of their first-choice land, but they were deprived of some of their most important possessions, including land wanted by Pakeha for industry, such as at Kaiwharawhara. Much of the Maori land - Native Reserves, many of them allocated in the area covered by this trail - was unsuitable for cultivation and the British Government insisted that more land be set aside. Some land already allocated to settlers was handed back to Maori in 1843, and the deprived Pakeha land owners were handsomely compensated. As a result of the British Government's intervention, Maori nearly doubled their land holdings, and this land, although greatly reduced in extent now, is today known as the Wellington "tenths".

## The Trail

# PART 1

## Kaiwharawhara, Ngaio, Crofton Downs, Wilton and Wadestown

- ▶ The trail starts at Kaiwharawhara, at the intersection of Kaiwharawhara Road and Hutt Road.

### Kaiwharawhara

The trail begins at the once thriving community of Kaiwharawhara, at the junction of the Hutt Road and the entrance to the Ngaio Gorge. The settlement was established very early in the city's history. By early 1841 there was a road, of sorts, from Wellington to Kaiwharawhara. It is hard to imagine today but by the end of the 19th century Kaiwharawhara was a densely populated settlement with houses lining both sides of Kaiwharawhara Road.

### 1. Hutt Road

Hutt Road was initially a narrow formed track that ran from the edge of Thorndon and wound its way around the western side of Wellington harbour to Petone and the Hutt. At high tide and in bad weather the road was impassable. The 1855 earthquake raised the road, along with the rest of the shoreline, by up to one metre and suddenly the Hutt Road was a much more viable route. The road was steadily improved throughout the 19th century, largely paid for by a much hated toll.

## Site of the Toll Gate, Hutt Road

Hutt Road toll gate was built in 1863 by the Provincial Council to pay for road maintenance and improvements. It was located just south of the present intersection of Hutt and Kaiwharawhara Roads in order to catch traffic from both the Hutt and western districts. The toll gate was an extremely unpopular tax with local residents because the money went to the Provincial Council and, after 1876, the Hutt County Council. No benefit was seen to be going to the residents of the northern settlements. Eventually in 1890, prompted by this grievance, the residents of Kaiwharawhara, Khandallah and Crofton decided to form a separate borough. Once the new borough was proclaimed, the Hutt County abolished the tolls. At the first meeting of the Onslow Borough the newly appointed Town Clerk was charged with employing labour to demolish the toll gate.

## The Borough of Onslow

United in opposition to the Hutt Road toll gate, the settlements linked by the Porirua Road and the Wellington–Manawatu Railway – Kaiwharawhara, Crofton (later Ngaio) and Khandallah – joined forces to establish a separate borough. Unable to meet the required population threshold, they asked Wadestown residents to join. Named after the Governor-General of the time, Lord Onslow, the borough was proclaimed on 13 March 1890. The first Mayor was William Littlejohn, then owner of Crofton (see 9) and the borough offices were at Kaiwharawhara, then known as Kaiwarra, indicating the significance of the location of this settlement. The borough was made up of three wards, North (Crofton and Khandallah), South (Wadestown), and East (Kaiwarra). In 1897 the borough covered an area of 2870 acres, and contained 1530 people living in about 276 dwellings. Wadestown left the borough in 1906. The remaining suburbs were amalgamated with Wellington City in 1919. The Onslow Borough Council held its last meeting on 12 March 1919.

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### The wreck of the *Oliver Lang*

The *Oliver Lang* was a three-masted, fully rigged ship built in Deptford, England. On its second voyage to New Zealand in 1858 the boat collided with another vessel while at sea. On reaching Wellington it was blown across the harbour in a gale and beached at Te Aro. It was eventually dragged to a point alongside the toll gate at Kaiwharawhara. It was initially proposed to convert the vessel into a wharf, as John Plimmer had done to the *Inconstant* in Wellington, but it never happened. The hulk was left on the beach until covered by railway reclamation. Many settlers of the northern suburbs sailed on the *Oliver Lang* and the sight of the wreck would have served as a regular reminder of their voyage to New Zealand. The ship bell is at Holy Trinity Church, Ohariu Valley.

- ▶ Running parallel with Kaiwharawhara Road is School Road. To get there, cross Kaiwharawhara Road, walk along Hutt Road and then turn right into School Road.



*Oliver Lang beached at Kaiwharawhara. (OHS)*

## 2. School Road

As its name suggests, School Road was the access to the first Kaiwharawhara school, built in 1867. Prior to this Kaiwharawhara children had to walk to schools in Thorndon. In 1912 there were about 80 pupils. The school was closed in 1928 when a new school opened in Fore Street. The old schoolhouse was converted into a factory for Vale coppers and then became part of Neeco's retail premises. It was demolished in 1972. There are older buildings still standing along this short street.

### Neeco

Directly in front of you as you come up the street is the factory built for the National Electrical & Engineering Co. Ltd (or Neeco). It began in the South Island in 1906, manufacturing wiring for electric lighting. Later the company diversified into, among other things, elevators for wool stalls, magnetos for milking machines and street lighting. The company set up a factory in Kaiwharawhara in 1933 to manufacture electric stoves. This became a successful enterprise, particularly because of the Government policy to only use New Zealand manufactured products in state houses. The company's production rose to 4000 stoves per year. Its production was diverted to the war effort during World War II.

### Levin and Co. Stores

On the right is the store built for Levin and Co., prominent stock and station agents from the early days of Wellington. Founder William Hort Levin (1845-1893) was one of Wellington's most successful merchants. An investor in the Wellington-Manawatu Railway Company, his name was given to the town Levin, a station on the line. Levin and Co. had five stores at

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Kaiwharawhara and a railway siding. During the 1920s and 30s this was the company's main wool storage facility. Wool was brought by road or rail from farms at Ohariu, the Wairarapa, Manawatu, and Rangitikei and by ship from Nelson and Marlborough. Today, Stores 2, 3 and 4 – actually one building – remain standing alongside School Road.

### 3. Fort Buckley

On the left-hand side of School Road, high up on the ridge above, is one of the forts built in the four main centres during the second 'Russian Scare' of 1885. Fort Buckley was hastily constructed out of earth to hold two 64-pounder guns and then rebuilt in permanent materials in 1886-7. The fort was probably named after the Hon. Sir Patrick Alphonsus Buckley, Colonial Secretary and Attorney General at the time. Fort Buckley is,



*A 64 pounder RML (rifle muzzle loading) gun at the newly erected Fort Buckley, some time after 1887. (Edgar Williams Collection, G0258921/1, ATL)*

along with Fort Ballance on the Miramar Peninsula, the most intact 'Russian Scare' fort in Wellington. Although it is difficult to imagine today, there was a track up to the fort from here. Gun shells were loaded from boats at the Kaiwharawhara wharf onto handcarts. The carts would then be pulled to the foot of the track and hauled up to the fort. There is a tunnel beneath the fort, built for the Wellington-Manawatu Railway in 1882.



*Unloading of explosives at Kaiwharawhara Wharf, 1906. The jetty was built in 1885, at the beginning of the second Russian scare. (Godber Collection, 37492½, ATL)*

A short, unformed track between 162 and 176 Barnard Street, Wadestown, leads to the remains of two gun emplacements.

- ▶ Return to Kaiwharawhara Road and walk up Pickering Street and turn left up Fore Street. Cross the road into Winchester Street and about 60 metres up on the left is the Wellington Activity Centre.

#### 4. Former Kaiwharawhara School (now Wellington Activity Centre), Winchester Street

This school was built in 1928 to replace the previous building erected on School Road in 1872. In the 1920s a railway settlement was built here, on the northern side of Kaiwharawhara Road, but in the 1950s the houses began to be removed and school rolls started to fall. The school finally closed in 1977. The removal of the settlement left behind steps, paths and overgrown sections. A new subdivision has removed any trace of this past settlement.

- ▶ Opposite the Activity Centre is the beginning of the Bridle Track. The lower section of the track winds its way through the new subdivision. Walk a short distance up the track past the subdivision to savour its character and enjoy the splendid views, or you may wish to walk the entire track (10–15 minutes).
- ▶ **Walking track**

#### 5. The Bridle Track

This was originally a Maori track leading from Kaiwharawhara over the hill to what is now Khandallah. When European settlers arrived, they used the track to travel from Wellington to points north. It was difficult to negotiate and was eventually widened and re-routed in places to make an easier grade. It became known as the Bridle Track.

Edward Jerningham Wakefield, the son of New Zealand Company founder Edward Gibbon Wakefield, described the track and the route inland as it was in 1840.

[From Kaiwharawhara] we ascended a steep hill, through extensive potato-gardens belonging to Tuarau; and from thence had a noble view of the harbour and the infant settlement. After a tedious march of two or three hours over very undulating ground on the top of the range, along a track constantly obstructed by webs of kareao, or supplejack, we came to the brow of a descent, from which we had a view of a narrow wooded valley, and a peep of the sea in Cook's Strait over a low part of the further hills.

E.J. Wakefield. 1845, *Adventure in New Zealand from 1839-1845*



*S.C. Brees' depiction of Wellington from the Bridle Track. c.1844. (69088½, ATL)*

The Bridle Track was bypassed in 1843 when construction began on the Porirua Road (see Part 2). Today the old track is a scenic walking route to Nicholson Road, Khandallah.

- ▶ Return to Kaiwharawhara Road and turn right. Drive 500 metres up the road and look on your left for a directional sign where a drive leads down away from the road to the Kaiwharawhara Magazine.



*Schultze's flourmill, in the foreground, from Old Porirua Road in 1878. The dam formed the lake to the right. (W.L. Travers, Nelson Provincial Museum)*

## 6. Kaiwharawhara Flour Mill

On your way up here you passed a bulk oil storage tank occupying the site of what was once Charles Schultze's water powered flour mill, which opened in 1846. A waterwheel was driven by a head of water obtained by damming the Kaiwharawhara Stream, thus forming a small lake. The mill was a considerable success and made Schultze, a Scotsman, a wealthy man. He was a prominent provincial councillor and owned much of the land in this area of Kaiwharawhara valley. The mill later burned down, while the dam lasted until the 1920s and was still visible until washed out by a flood in 1942.

## 7. Kaiwharawhara Powder Magazine

 Wellington's oldest standing stone building was once the Wellington district magazine. It was built in 1879–80 as a response to criticism of the practice of carrying gunpowder through Wellington streets to the store at Mt Cook. This magazine was built on land bought from Charles Schultze and designed by Charles O'Neill, civil engineer and architect. There were two separate magazine buildings, as well as a keeper's house, stables and coach house. The building was under continual threat from flood, and in 1890 the cottage was washed away. The army abandoned the magazine in 1921. It was then used by a variety of businesses, and much altered. In 2000 the just-restored magazine was partly destroyed by fire when a security van stolen in a robbery was hidden inside and torched by the robbers. Today the remaining magazine and part of one wall of another are being managed as a partial ruin by the Wellington City Council.

### ► **Walking track**

► Continue up Kaiwharawhara Road / Ngaio Gorge Road. At the top turn left into Trelissick Crescent. The entrance to Trelissick park is part of the way along the Crescent.

### ► **Walking track**

## 8. Trelissick Crescent and Trelissick Park

Trelissick was the farm of Captain Edward Daniell, who lived on the property from 1843–1848. In 1888 the first subdivision in the area we know now as Ngaio was proposed for part of the Trelissick estate. Another part of the estate became Trelissick Park. It was gradually acquired by the Wellington City Council from 1920 when seven acres were bought by the Council from the then owners. In 1922 more land was taken by proclamation. The park is still intact today and access can be gained from Trelissick Crescent.



## Captain Edward Daniell, 1800–1866

Daniell was born at Trelissick House, Cornwall in 1800, and after his education joined the army. From 1836 to 1839 he worked with the New Zealand Land Association. He arrived in Wellington in 1839 and was a member of the Committee for First Settlement, the first governing authority. By 1842 Daniell had acquired over 120 hectares of land – most of what makes up Ngaio today. He built a road to his property which was continued to a mill run by sawmillers leasing Daniell's land. This road eventually became the first section of the Old Porirua Road. In 1848 Daniell and his family moved to his Hutt Valley estate. Before he left Ngaio he sold land to William Fox. (See Crofton). Most of the remaining farmland was leased to settlers and later subdivided by Daniell's descendants. Daniell died in 1866 and is remembered in Trelissick Crescent, Trelissick Park and Captain Edward Daniell Drive.

(Photo, OHS)

▶ Continue down Kenya Street and look for Crofton.

### 9. Crofton, 21 Kenya Street

 William Fox (1812–1893) purchased 14 acres from Captain Edward Daniell in 1848 for £100. Fox built Crofton in 1857 and it remains one of Wellington's oldest houses. The house was built around an earlier house. Fox was a notable New Zealand statesman and four times Premier of New Zealand, but he is also well known as a painter and his earlier works are an important historical record. He built another house, Westoe (1874), near

Marton, which still stands. In 1862 Fox sold the house and land to Charles Abraham, the Bishop of Wellington, who opened the Church of England Grammar School – the forerunner to Wellington College – the following year. Among later owners were Wilson Littlejohn, first Mayor of Onslow, and John Holmes, a Kaiwharawhara tanner. Although later divided into flats the house is now restored as a family home.



*Church of England Grammar School pupils standing in the fields in front of Crofton in the mid-1860s. (W.L. Travers, Nelson Provincial Museum)*

## 10. Donisthorpe, 12 Kenya Street

The distinctive turret of Donisthorpe is a Ngaio landmark. The land on which this property stands was once part of the Crofton Estate. It was purchased as part of the Littlejohn subdivision by James Watkin Kinneburgh in 1895.



*Donisthorpe, from the west, soon after the two wings were added. (Newbold Collection, OHS)*

In 1900 the house was sold to Arthur Newbold who named it Donisthorpe after a village in England. The house was extensively enlarged by the addition of two wings. Just before World War II the house was divided into flats but has since been restored to a single residence.

- ▶ At the end of Kenya Street, turn left into Crofton Road and park in the vicinity of the shop on the left. The church is just behind you on the opposite side of the road.

### 11. All Saints Anglican Church, Abbot Street

This is the first of a series of prominently sited and attractively designed Anglican churches built in Onslow and Johnsonville. This Clere and Clere designed building was completed in 1928 and built by W. Husband of Berhampore from brick and jarrah, with a Welsh slate roof. Frederick de Jersey Clere was diocesan architect for the Anglican church for over 50 years.

## 12. Cockayne House, 14 Ottawa Road

Just before the roundabout and above the road is this house, owned in the latter part of his life by Dr Leonard Cockayne (1855–1934), one of New Zealand’s most eminent botanists. In his role as Chief Government Botanist Cockayne visited virtually every major ecological area in New Zealand. His concern for the diminishing native flora in New Zealand led to him establishing the Otari Plant Museum (see 16) in 1926. After his death, the portion of Old Porirua Road between Crofton and Box Hill was renamed Cockayne Road in his honour. He and his wife Maud were buried at Otari. Leonard Cockayne’s son Alfred was himself a distinguished botanist and former Director-General of the Department of Agriculture.



*Leonard Cockayne, centre, flanked by explorer Charlie Douglas, left, and surveyor George Roberts, on the West Coast in 1897. (PAColl-5926-08, ATL)*

- ▶ Continue down Crofton Road, turn right into Ottawa Road and stop by the library.

### Ngaio

In common with the other parts that make up the Onslow district, the first European use of Ngaio was farming, in conjunction with the sawmilling that helped remove the trees. Ngaio, then Crofton, was the first station on the Wellington-Manawatu line. Closer settlement began with the first subdivision of land in 1888 and parcels of land were regularly offered by land owners in the area in the early part of the 20th century.

A fuller history of the area is available on the information panel.

#### ► **Walking track**

► Continue up Ottawa Road to Chew Cottage on the left.

### **13. Chew Cottage, 19 Ottawa Road**

 Chew Cottage was the home of John and Esther Chew and family. It was built about 1865. The property was named Millwood. John Chew, an engineer, invested in the timber industry and re-established the Kaiwarra sawmill near the site of Ngaio Town Hall of today. The Cummings Park stream was banked to form a dam to supply water power to the mill. Largely unchanged, Chew Cottage is one of the few Wellington houses from the 1860s still extant. It resembles a traditional English stone cottage adapted for timber construction.



*Chew Cottage in the 1930s, with the Town Hall roof in the distance. At this time Ottawa Road was still a country lane. (OHS)*

## The Chew Family

John and Esther Chew (nee Horsfall) and their family emigrated from Yorkshire, England, to New Zealand on the *Oliver Lang* in 1858. Shortly after their arrival they moved to Crofton. In 1859, John Chew acquired part of sections 7 and 8 Kaiwharawhara district, partly by purchase and partly by lease. On the property which he had freehold he built his first house and farm buildings. Chew, who became a successful timber merchant, died in March 1888. Two children were born in Chew Cottage, Jessie and Annie. The latter married E.A. Gibson and lived in the house until 1958.

- ▶ Drive along Ottawa Road and into Khandallah Road. Pull over just after the intersection with Ngatoto Street for a visit to the Onslow Historical Society's building on your right, where you can see more about the places described in this trail. The centre is generally open on Saturday and Sunday afternoons 1–4pm and by appointment. Check the board outside for opening hours.

### 14. Onslow Historical Society Building (Khandallah Automatic Telephone Exchange), 86 Khandallah Road

Designed by the Government Architect, John Campbell (with assistance from J.T. Mair), KATE opened in 1922. Further additions were made to the rear of the building by Mair in 1925. By the 1950s the exchange operated in tandem with a new automatic exchange adjacent to the building. This is the second oldest exchange building to survive in New Zealand and is today the home of the Onslow Historical Society.

- ▶ Turn right into Lucknow Street, right into Swansea Street, right into Bombay and then right into Tarikaka Street.

### Colway Farm

The area you are driving through was once part of Colway Farm. Until the farm was put up for auction in 1908, land for housing was scarce and Ngaio developed only slowly. However, it took the arrival of the Bell Bus Company in the early 1920s, and regular transport to the city, for housing development to move more swiftly. A large portion of the estate was bought by the Government, in 1926 (Wellington Education Board for Ngaio School), and 1927 (for the Tarikaka Street railway settlement).

### The Aplans of Colway Farm

Christopher and Ellen Aplin arrived in Wellington in 1863. Christopher Aplin was to act as servant to his employer, District Judge Ward. Two years later the Aplans moved to Crofton, taking up a dairy farm which was to become known as Colway, the name of the farm they had left in England. They bought the land in 1877. Their home was situated where the current main block of Ngaio School is located. Three generations of Aplans worked and lived in the Ngaio area.

## 15. The Tarikaka Street Railway Settlement

Tarikaka (Snare of the kaka) comes from Tarikaka Hill, now known as Kaukau, the hill which dominates Ngaio and Khandallah. In the 1920s the Colway farm was turned into this remarkable settlement.

The Railways Department became one of the biggest employers in the country in the early 1900s and with this came an increasing demand for housing from its workers, partly because of the itinerant nature of the work. The Department had provided some accommodation for employees up until 1920 but an acute housing shortage, particularly near city stations, forced it to embark on a major project to provide permanent dwellings.

In 1920 an architectural department of the Railways Department was set up and headed by George Troup to design and build prefabricated houses. Although essentially very similar, the four basic house designs differed slightly in roof line and porch details, thereby achieving a discernible variation in appearance. Standardised joinery, spouting, and ridging were produced and the necessary timber cut. Material was then transported by rail to the nearest station. A construction gang would assemble the house in about three weeks. By July 1923 a factory and sawmill had been built and opened at Frankton Junction, near Hamilton, and assembly line production was in full swing.

At Ngaio, the Railways Department bought eight hectares of land from the Aplin family in 1927 for £10,000 and within a year 93 houses had been built. Later, in the 1930s, more houses to different designs were built. Railway employees leased these houses for more than 60 years until they were sold by New Zealand Railways as part of a disposal of non-strategic assets. Many long-term tenants bought their houses.



*Plan A, one of four variations in porch and roof design found in the early houses at the Tarikaka Street railway settlement. (C. Cochran Collection)*

- ▶ At the end of Tarikaka Street turn left into Khandallah Road and drive back along Ottawa Road to the second roundabout. Go straight through the roundabout into Waikowhai Street and continue along this road. Just after the railway bridge turn left into the carpark for the Crofton Downs station and a good view of the railway.

## 16. Johnsonville Branch Railway – former Wellington and Manawatu Railway

The Wellington–Manawatu Railway Company was formed in 1882 to complete a railway up the west coast of the North Island, begun by the Government three years earlier. The line finished at Longburn, near Palmerston North, and was completed in 1886. The Crofton Downs railway station, although the newest station on the line (1952), is one of the best places to see the line and appreciate the kind of engineering difficulties overcome during construction. Between here and Wellington numerous brick-lined tunnels and cuttings were built through rocky bluffs. The company was bought by the Government in 1908 and the line became part of the Main Trunk line to Auckland. With the completion of the Tawa Deviation in 1937 the line was bypassed and Johnsonville became the terminus of a suburban line. It was electrified in 1938 and is today owned and operated by Toll Rail New Zealand.

### Crofton Downs

Crofton Downs was farmland until the early 1950s when it was subdivided for housing. The railway station was built to provide access to the railway for the future residents of the suburb. Road access was also improved with the construction of Churchill Drive.

- ▶ Continue along Churchill Drive to its conclusion and turn right into Wilton Road. The Otari Native Plant Reserve and Wilton Farm House are a short distance on. Park in the angle parking near the Wilton Bowling Club or the main carpark. A panel on the reserve can be found at each entrance.

- ▶ **Walking track**

## 17. Otari-Wilton's Bush and Wilton Farm House, 116 Wilton Road

Wilton's Bush is the only substantial piece of virgin native forest left in Wellington City. Its survival is partly the result of the decision of Job and Ellen Wilton to set aside some 7.5 hectares (17 acres) of bush on their farm. The addition of associated land once owned by Maori brought the reserve to 80 hectares in extent. In 1925 this block was acquired by the "Mayor, Councillors and Citizens of Wellington", and chosen to be the site of the Otari Open Air Native Plant Museum, established in 1926 by botanist Leonard Cockayne.

In 1952, at the northern entrance to Otari-Wilton's Bush, a plaque was unveiled and memorial gates dedicated to Job and Ellen Wilton. Among the guests were three of their children and more than 100 descendants. Associated with the bush is the original farmhouse, begun in 1861.

- ▶ Follow the road back to the intersection of Churchill Drive and Wilton Road and turn right to continue along Wilton Road. Follow this road as it turns into Wadestown Road. Look for a park in the vicinity of the intersection with Pitt Street.

## The Wilton Family

Job Wilton arrived with his parents, Elizabeth and Robert, on the *Oriental* in 1841. Ellen Curtis arrived with her parents, George and Priscilla, on the *London* in 1840. They were married at St Paul's Church, Wellington on 21 August 1860. That same month Job Wilton purchased 108 acres of land in Section 1 Kaiwarra District from Samuel Maxton of Wellington. In 1861 Job and Ellen moved into a small two-room cottage built on the property. A substantial addition to the house was made in 1883. This house, difficult to see, is located behind the stand of trees next to the bowling club. A shed and dairy also survive. In 1902 the homestead block was separated from the rest of the farm and the remaining portion subdivided and sold. In 1915 the house and remaining land was sold to Ellen's nephew, William Ernest Curtis, and wife Annie. Their descendants still live in the family house.



*Wilton Homestead is largely obscured from the road. This is the view from the west. (OHS)*



*Otari Wilton's Bush in 1932 with Leonard Cockayne's native plant museum laid out on the slopes. The regrowth of the forest since then has transformed the reserve. (Evening Post Collection, G88438½, ATL)*

## Wadestown

Early attempts to create a workers' settlement here failed after the 1848 earthquake destroyed many flimsy wattle and daub cottages. After much of the subdivided land was bought by wealthy businessmen and cleared, large houses were built among the farms. Later in the century more fashionable dwellings were built and by the 1920s some of Wellington's finest houses were to be found here. After the arrival of the tram service in 1911 it became possible for people of more modest means to build a house in Wadestown and today small villas and bungalows sit near large houses.

## 18. St Luke's Anglican Church, 35 Pitt Street

The first Anglican church services in Wadestown were held in the home of Thomas and Elizabeth Roscoe, after whom nearby Roscoe Terrace is named. Services were later moved to St Paul's churchroom on Wadestown Road when it opened in 1881. St Luke's Church was designed by Frederick de Jersey Clere and was consecrated by Bishop Wallis on 28 March 1909. A church hall / Sunday School built in 1929 stood alongside the church until 2003.

- ▶ Walk down Pitt Street and turn left into Fernhill Street. Fernhill is near the bottom of the street. A walking track to Ngaio Gorge is at the end of the street.
- ▶ **Walking track**

## 19. Fernhill, 15 Fernhill Terrace

The earliest part of this house is thought to have been built in the mid-1840s, which would make it one of the oldest buildings in Wellington. The owner of the property at this time was Charles Pharazyn who stayed one year before leaving to become a pastoralist in the Wairarapa. The bulk of the house was built in the early 1860s for Samuel Grimstone. The house was bought by Euphemia Maxwell, a widow, in 1866. During her tenure her daughters ran a private school here. The house has had numerous owners but has retained its essential character. Note the mouldings over the ground floor windows and the elegant bay window.

- ▶ Return to Lennel Street, turn left and drive the short distance down to Wadestown Library where there is a panel describing some of the history of Wadestown. After you have viewed the panel, continue down Lennel Road and then turn left into Sefton Street.

As you drove down Lennel Road you would have noticed that, after the intersection with Sefton Street, this road continued on through a steep cutting. This was cut for the tram service which began in 1911. An earlier, more leisurely road is the one we are following now. You will also have noticed an elegant bus shelter at that intersection. It was originally built for the tram service.



## **William Barnard Rhodes**

The street names in this area are associated with the property of William Barnard Rhodes who, in 1868, began the building of a large mansion, "The Grange", where Orchard Street is located today. The Rhodes family was at one time one of the biggest

land-owning families in New Zealand. W.B. Rhodes had already made money from pastoral farming and whaling by the time he arrived in Wellington in 1840. He made a considerable fortune as a trader and businessman. He was also a prominent Provincial and Legislative councillor. He first bought land in Wadestown in 1842. Sar Street is named for the initials of his second wife Sarah Anne Rhodes, Anne Street also for Sarah Rhodes, Barnard Street is named for Rhodes' middle name, and Sefton and Moorhouse Streets were named for Sarah Rhodes' brother William Sefton Moorhouse.

## Northern Suburbs

- ▶ Follow this road as it becomes Barnard Street. You can get access to Fort Buckley on the bend opposite 161 Barnard Street. The track is well formed but care must be taken. Continue down Barnard Street to Sar Street. At the end of Sar Street turn left into Thorndon Quay and drive back to Kaiwharawhara.

## 20. Thorndon Quay warehouses

Thorndon Quay once marked the edge of land before reclamation intervened. Some of warehouses you see on your left were built in the early part of the 20th century to house wool. The size of these warehouses, some considerably altered and all now put to vastly different uses, indicates the huge impact the success of the wool industry had on the New Zealand economy.

Part 2 of this trail continues from this point.

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Wellington City Council is a member of the Heritage Trails Foundation.

Brochures for other walks are available at the Visitor Information Office, Civic Square

Cover: A Maori man and woman walking on a road in Wadestown c.1870s, with, possibly, Mt Kau Kau in the background. (John Barr Clarke, G200A, ATL)

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