EXPLORE

The Eastern Walkway extends along the southern end of Oriental Peninsula from the Pass of Branda to Tarakena Bay. The track is 2.5 km long and takes about one and a half hours to complete. The track surface is mainly gravel and much of the track is exposed.

The route is described here from the Pass of Branda to Tarakena Bay, but marker posts can be walked in either direction or the recommended circular route back along Breaker Bay Road (see map). There is an extra walk which can be done out to Point Dorset, allowing one hour to discover World War II gun batteries and observation posts. Please don’t climb on the observation posts as they are unsafe and near collapse. The track is steep in places and very exposed.

Along the way you will see many historical sites and spectacular views of Wellington Harbour. You will also learn about some of the fascinating history behind the geological formation and diverse local history of Oriental Peninsula.

From the city, take the Rudall Street bus to the Tarakan Road terminal. Refer to the map for the Pass of Branda start (the walkway entrance is signposted).

Wahine Disaster, 1968

Though there have been more dramatic shipwrecks in New Zealand’s maritime history, the sinking of the Wahine on April 10, 1968, is the most well known. The tragedy can be attributed to one cause – the weather. The storm, which raged upon Wellington was one of the worst ever recorded in New Zealand. Its ferocity was due to a combination of two storms which happened to merge directly over Wellington.

At 2:30pm the Wahine stuck on the southern outer shelf of Barrett Reef where the vessel grounded and suffered severe damage to her bow while her propellers were still turning. At 3:30pm the Wahine finally went aground.

At around 2.40pm Captain Robert H. Robertson gave the order to abandon ship. Between 2.15 and 2.30pm with her stability compromised, the Wahine slowly sank in two pieces and lies in 40 m of water. The Wahine are present at both Wahine and Point Dorset Memorials (both of the way are mentioned further).

The Wahine Memorial holds the remains of two crew members who were lost – Baring and Pencarrow heads. The Memorial has been dedicated to all those who lost their lives on the Wahine disaster. The Wahine Memorial consists of two stone sets of the Wahine. The stone sets are present at both Wahine and Point Dorset Memorials (both of the way are mentioned further).
Maori Historical Sites

A - Papanuiwahine
The fortified pa protected the approach to Whetu Kairangi from the sea, and it was in the vicinity of Waipana, a place where hapuka (groper) were caught. The nearby ditches can still be seen.

B - Point Pa
A heavily terraced, gabled and decorated village under Hei-ti Chief Takata, was attacked and destroyed, along with Raglan Pa, by warriors from the north under Nga Pa’a Tawhiti in 1860-61. Large numbers were killed.

C - Rangitatau Pa
One of the earliest fortresses constructed in Titikapuna (Tawa) in the great hurangai of 1858 was an ancient site thought to have been occupied during Marathi’s time. The fortification protected the approach to Whataitai and the Tawa River.

D - Rangitatau/Palmer Head
The eastern ridge was home to another pa site of Tawa, which is still recognizable today. On the eastern side is a cliff-like depression that may be an old enceinte view from the beach below, but sites here are also found further along, to the east, the sites known as Te Kirahau and Tawa are a fascinating viewing spot where hapuka (groper) were caught.

GEOLOGY AND HISTORY
What now exists as a peninsula was once an island named Motu-kairangi (Miramar Peninsula). The land was a large expanse of water worn boulders scattered about were probably used as having a very scenic 40 minute walk along the ridge at Point Dorset. From the Ataturk Memorial, there is a wide view to the north across the Harbour along Breaker Bay Road, to the southeasterly points, and Pencarrow Head and the Pencarrow Lighthouse to the southeast.

RANGITATAU Lighthouse
Theutz was known as the Wahine’s last stop. The Wahine propeller was not recovered until 1935, when a divers’ search party began scuba diving in the Wahine Memorial Park. The Wahine Memorial Park was not maintained by the Citizens’ Libraries and Civil Defence Committee Ltd. until 1935. The Wahine Memorial Park was officially opened in 1935.

WHATSOEVER WALKWAY
The watu pa was fenced off from the street by a 1.5m high sandstone wall, and the Wahine Memorial Park was designed by the late R. K. Waddell.

WHATSOEVER MEMORIAL PARK
The park was named after chairman Dr. D. M. Howard-Grice (1949-50) to recognize his efforts on behalf of the residents of Seatoun.

LOST SITES
The site of the original pa was fenced off by a 1.5m high sandstone wall, and the Wahine Memorial Park was designed by the late R. K. Waddell.

WALKWAY AT THE PASS OF BRANDA
In April 1947, the Council resolved at a meeting that the then abandoned area of Fisherman Road would be known as the Wahine Memorial Park. The Park faces onto St. Kranz Road, which terminated Wahine Road on the bank of the Tawa River (now known as the Tawa River). In the same place in the vicinity the Memorial Park is a large boulder, marking a submerged propeller from the Wahine.

Perfect Storm
The site of Wahine was fenced off by a 1.5m high sandstone wall, and the Wahine Memorial Park was designed by the late R. K. Waddell.

FOOTNOTE
The site of Wahine was fenced off by a 1.5m high sandstone wall, and the Wahine Memorial Park was designed by the late R. K. Waddell.

FLORA AND FAUNA
Native birds along the walkway and Breaker Bay Road include takahe (waxeyes), kiotare (kakariki), korora (little blue penguin), tarauru (red-billed gull) and koura (little blue penguin).

Other Explore Wellington Brochures featuring Wellington Town Belt, parks and reserves, and art and heritage walks in the city are available at stands at the Wellington Information Centre on Wakefield Street, Wellington International Airport and the Wellington Railway Station. Brochures are also available at the Wellington City Council on 04 499 4444, or visit our website www.wellington.govt.nz for details.

The “50 Road Mountain Biking in Wellington” brochures are also available at the Wellington Information Centre, Wakefield Street or check out www.mountainbiking.org.nz for information about mountain biking in Wellington.

Planting a tree is a wonderful way to commemorate something special or to take an active part in creating a greener future. There’s lots of ways you can help to restore the city’s reserve, bush and coastal areas – and some don’t involve getting your hands dirty! Phone 0800 494444 or visit Wellington.govt.nz for more information.