

EASTERN WALKWAY

EXPLORE WELLINGTON

Discover Wellington's Town Belt, reserves and walkways



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ME HEKE KI PŌNEKE WELLINGTON CITY COUNCIL **Wellington**

From the Pass of Branda, the track ascends steeply by steps and zigzags for about 300m, partly in a pine plantation. A track to Beacon Hill Road is signposted. At the top a resting place overlooks Point Dorset, Chaffers Passage, Barrett Reef and vessels entering and leaving Wellington Harbour.

1 | Barrett Reef Tangihanga-a-Kupe

If you follow the line of rocks from Point Dorset southwest you will see Barrett Reef. The row of jagged rocks at the entrance to Wellington Harbour was named Te Tangihanga-a-Kupe.

There are two stories behind the name; the first is because of the fancied resemblance of the rocks to a row of mourners at a Maori tangi (the wailing party of Kupe). The second story is about the place that Kupe stopped to cry for those whom he left behind in the area, including his daughter Matiu and niece Makaro (after whom Some and Ward islands are named after), while he continued his voyage of discovery of Aotearoa.

This is the site of many shipwrecks in the past century including:

a | Wanganella, 1947

The Wanganella, nearing the completion of a voyage from Sydney to Wellington, ran onto the rocks at the southern end of Barrett Reef on January 19. She remained in this perilous position for 18 days and after a remarkable spell of fine weather she floated clear. The ship was on her first post-war civilian voyage across the Tasman Sea and had 400 passengers on board. No loss of life occurred and the Wanganella was repaired and back in service after two years.

b | Hunter, 1876

On April 8 the schooner became stranded on the southernmost rock of Barrett Reef. No lives were lost but the vessel was completed damaged.

c | Earl of Southesk, 1874

On May 28 the barque struck heavily on the southern end of Barrett Reef. Rough sea conditions caused the master and 12-member crew to abandon the wreck five minutes before she slipped off the rocks and sank in 12 fathoms of water.

Continue along the undulating track which leads around Beacon Hill. A track to Signallers Grove is signposted. Further along a sign points to Beacon Hill Road.



EXPLORE

The Eastern Walkway extends along the southern end of Miramar 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 mean it can be walked in either direction or in the recommended circular route back along Breaker Bay Road (see map).

There is also an extra walk which can be done out to Point Dorset, allow one hour to discover World War II gun batteries and observation posts. Please don't climb or enter 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 Maori 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 Miramar Peninsula.

From the city, take the No.11 Seatonou bus to the Seatonou terminal. Refer to the map for the Pass of Branda start (the walkway entrance is signposted).

All along the route are numerous seats and picnic spots. Dogs are permitted but must be on a leash. The walkway is closed to mountain bikers.



Turn right here and a short way up the track is the Beacon Hill Lookout.

Contrasting views can be enjoyed – Baring and Pencarrow heads and the Cook Strait are in one direction with the eastern suburbs, the Wellington International Airport, Evans and Iyall bays in the other.



2 | Beacon Hill Signal Station

The Beacon Hill Signal Station has been in

operation since 1864. Parts of the original building remain today although much of it has been rebuilt and equipment upgraded over the years. The station maintains a 24-hour all year round "harbour control" service, much like airport traffic control.

The Greater Wellington Regional Council Harbourmaster's Office operates the station. Public access to the station is restricted by the Maritime Security Act 2004.

Visit the Beacon Hill webcam web site www.wrc.govt.nz/beaconhill or Greater Wellington Regional Council's web site at www.wrc.govt.nz/em/manhar.htm to see more.

The Beacon Hill Signal Station played its part in supporting the shipwreck disaster Wahine in 1968.

The walkway descends from Beacon Hill Lookout past the Sidlaw Street and Bury Crescent tracks. Signposts indicate the main route. The walkway rises enroute to Palmer Head and the Ataturk Memorial Historic Reserve.



3 | Ataturk Memorial

The Memorial commemorates Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, defender of Gallipoli and first president of modern Turkey. The memorial, funded by the Turkish government, was dedicated in 1990. The site was chosen because of its physical resemblance to Anzac Cove in Gallipoli. Beneath the memorial is a container of soil from Anzac Cove.

Ataturk's mathematics teacher gave him the second name of Kemal (which means perfection), in recognition of his very clever abilities. At that time very few Turkish people had a second name or surname.

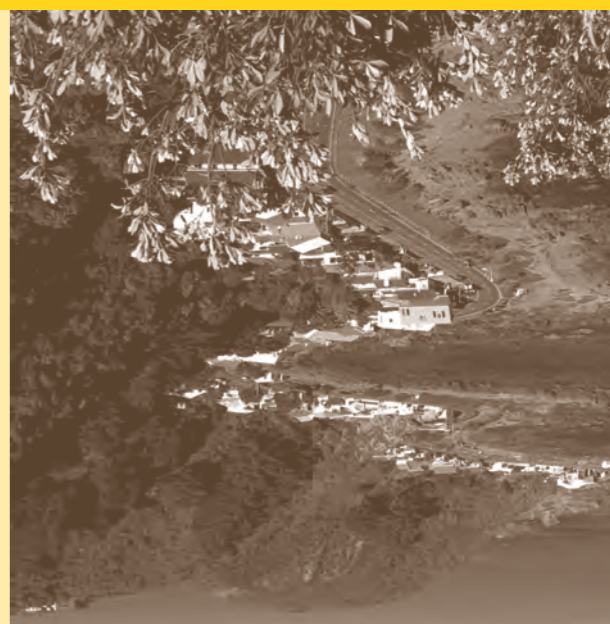


Wahine Disaster, 1968

Though there have been worse shipping disasters in New Zealand with greater loss, the sinking of the Wahine on April 10 is by far the most well known. The tragedy can be attributed to one major cause – the weather. The storm which exploded 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 6.41am the Wahine struck on the southernmost rocks of Barrett Reef where the vessel grounded and suffered severe damage to her hull whereby seawater entered parts of the ship. She was then driven northward by the storm towards Point Dorset, slowly dragging her anchors along the western shoreline until she reached a position where her stern was close to Steeple Rock. Here her anchors gripped and held.

At about 1.20pm Captain Hector Robertson gave the fateful 'abandon ship' order. Between 2.15 and 2.30pm with her stability completely lost, she heeled over and crashed heavily to the seabed where she rested on the sandy bottom. Fifty-one lives were lost. Remnants of the Wahine are present at both Wahine and Churchill Parks (both on the map and mentioned further on).



Walk through some of Wellington's beautiful parks and discover picturesque views, stunning flora and fauna, and some early history of the area. The Eastern Walkway guides you from the Pass of Branda, past many historical Maori sites to spectacular views of Tarakena Bay.

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EASTERN WALKWAY VIA MIRAMAR PENINSULA, THE PASS OF BRANDA, TARAKENA BAY AND ALSO POINT DORSET.

WELLINGTON CITY

MIRAMAR PENINSULA

PASS OF BRANDA

POINT DORSET

TARAKENA BAY

MAORI HISTORICAL SITES

A | Paewhenua

Above Eve Bay is a Maori kainga (village) site. Signs of occupation have been noted in the form of shell heaps and human remains. At one time a considerable number of karaka trees grew along the coast, but by the 1950s many had disappeared or were dying.

B | Poito Pa

A heavily terraced, palisaded and stockaded village under Ngati Ira Chief Takatua, was attacked and destroyed, along with Rangitatau Pa, by raiders from the north under Nga Puhī's Tuwhare in 1819-20. Large numbers were killed.

C | Rangitatau Pa

One of the earliest fortresses constructed in Te Whanganui a Tara (the great harbour of Tara) was an ancient site thought to have been occupied in Tara's time. The fortified pa protected the approach to Whetu Kairangi from the sea, with its clear view of Cook Strait and the approaches to the Harbour. The nearby village of Poito often used this pa as a citadel in times of stress or as a retreat when invaders were threatening. Tuteremoana is the chief associated with this site. He was the last principal chief of Ngai Tara in the 17th century. Terraces and ditches can still be seen.

D | Rangitatau/Palmer Head

The eastern ridge was home to another pa site of Tara, which is still recognisable today. On the eastern side is a ditch-like depression that may be an old entrance way from the beach below. Hut sites are also found further along. Out to sea, the rock site Te Kaiwhatawhata at the end of Palmer Head, was a favourable fishing spot where hapuka (groper) were caught.



From the Ataturk Memorial, look west over the Rangitatau Historic Reserve.

Before descending to Tarakena Bay and Mōa Point Road, enjoy the views of Wellington Harbour heads and on a fine day the South Island and the Kaikoura Ranges. From the road, it is a very scenic 40 minute walk along Breaker Bay Road back to the Pass of Branda or a one hour walk to the Seatoun bus terminal.



4 | Wahine Memorial Park

On April 4, 1975 the Council resolved at a meeting that the foreshore area at Palmer Head would be known as the Wahine Memorial Park. The park faces onto Barrett Reef, which the Interisland Ferry Wahine struck on the day of its tragic capsizing on April 10, 1968. There is a plaque bearing the inscription "Wahine Memorial Park" on a large boulder, near to the manoeuvring propeller from the Wahine.



The propeller was not erected until 1978, when the Town Clerk wrote to the Director of Parks suggesting the propeller be mounted in the park with a plaque. This was confirmed by the Cultural, Libraries and Civil Defence Committee April 3, 1978.



Notice the "Slow down! Penguins crossing - Kia Tupato, He Korora e whiti ana" signs.

5 | Churchill Park

The park was named after ex-Councillor J G Churchill (OBE, Councillor 1950-1964) to recognise his efforts on behalf of the people of Wellington and in particular the residents of Seatoun. As chairman of the Reserves Committee he provided citizens with all types of areas and had provided open spaces where previously there had been none. In the early 1990s, a Wahine Memorial was erected and designed by Peter Kundycki.

POINT DORSET

Opposite the entrance to the Eastern Walkway at the Pass of Branda is the track which leads to Point Dorset. The start of the track is steep and exposed so take care. Follow the track up the ridge and enjoy stunning views south across the Harbour along Breaker Bay Road to the southwest, and Pencarrow Head and the Pencarrow Lighthouse to the southeast.



PENCARROW LIGHTHOUSE

The cast iron Pencarrow Lighthouse was the first permanent lighthouse to be built in New Zealand and was run by New Zealand's only woman lighthouse-keeper, Mrs Bennett. The cast iron tower was made in England and then erected on Pencarrow Head, at the entrance to Wellington Harbour in 1859. It remained operational until 18 June, 1935 when it was replaced by an automated light erected at Baring Head east of Pencarrow. The Pencarrow Lighthouse was offered to the New Zealand Historic Places Trust in 1966, and the Trust has maintained the building ever since. It is now a popular destination for hikers and bikers, and is surrounded by a recreational reserve.

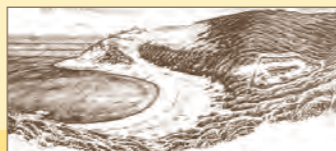
Along the track take time to explore and discover Fort Dorset and the now long abandoned gun batteries and observation posts.



FORT DORSET

In 1908 work began on constructing a two-gun battery on the top of the ridge at Point Dorset. From 1911 this battery became Wellington's main coast defence. Five years on, a 12-pounder (12pdr) examination battery was added.

It was not however until 1929 that Fort Dorset was officially declared a military establishment. However, this was just a legal change of status as it had been formally used for military exercises before World War I, and proposed as a battery site since the 1870s. Fort Dorset and the new 6" battery built at Palmer Head above Strathmore were at the outbreak of World War II the only large coastal guns in place to defend Wellington.



GEOLOGY AND HISTORY

What now exists as a peninsula was once an island named Motu-kairangi (Miramar 'island') by early Maori. The island was isolated from the main land mass by a shallow channel called Te Awa-a-Taia. In 1460 a severe earthquake raised the island to form the peninsula. Maori renamed this Whataitai. Another earthquake in 1855 caused a second uplift which created the peninsula we see today.

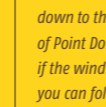
The earthquake in 1460 was named Te Haowhenua by the early tangata whenua of the area and is referred to in a number of contemporary waiata (song) commemorating the long history of Te Whanganui a Tara.



Early in World War II the area was used as a satellite camp with accommodation for mainly the heavy

artillery regiment. Its headquarters were situated here at Fort Dorset. It provided accommodation for about 200 military personnel as well as messing facilities and personnel administration.

Among the different batteries of guns were 6" and 4" guns, Q.F. 12pdr guns as well as search lights and radar. Along the southern ridgeline were two fire control posts and observation posts, as well as guns infantry pillboxes on the foreshore below. On November 1, 1991, Fort Dorset was officially closed, and in 1999 demolition work started.



down to the beach and round to the tip of Point Dorset - a great site for a picnic if the wind is not too strong. From here you can follow the track back the way you came to the Pass of Branda or continue along and head north. Along the northern ridge you can look down on what was the town of Bree.

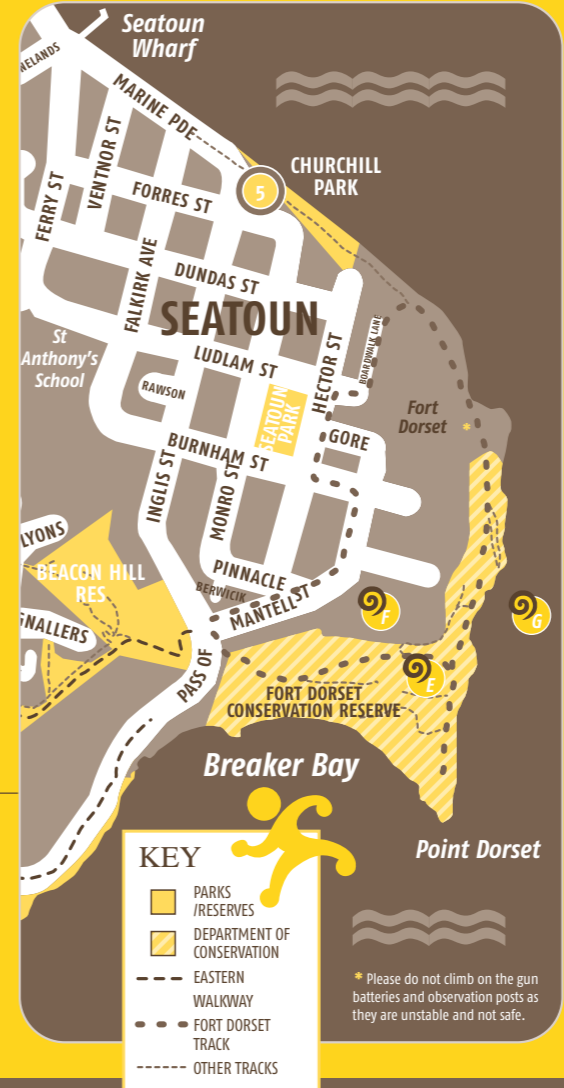
THE LORD OF THE RINGS SET

The first scenes to be filmed in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy were in and around Bree and The Prancing Pony Inn. The town was constructed on parts of Fort Dorset where filming took several nights and the use of "watermakers" gave the illusion of a rainy night in Bree. At the completion of filming the set of Bree was destroyed.

FORT DORSET NOW

Seatoun School now occupies the southern sportfield as well as areas that the parade ground, the 22 (D) gunbays and offices occupied. The land both north and south of the new school contains all new subdivisions which occupy what was the sergeants mess, conference room and gym, guard house, Fort Dorset headquarters and barracks.

After walking along the beach you can head up Boardwalk Lane and along to the Seatoun bus terminal, or continue the walk along the beach to Churchill Park.



KEY

- PARKS /RESERVES
- DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
- EASTERN WALKWAY
- FORT DORSET TRACK
- OTHER TRACKS

* Please do not climb on the gun batteries and observation posts as they are unstable and not safe.

SAFETY AND REGULATIONS

Dogs must be kept on a leash



No Fires

No Mountain Biking

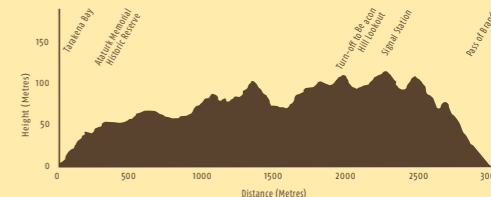


No Camping

No Litter



TOPOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



FLORA AND FAUNA



Introduced plants dominate the ridge along which the walkway runs. However native plants are common and their colonisation of the ridge is being encouraged by plantings of species such as flax, cabbage tree and broadleaf (kapuka).

Native birds along the walkway and Breaker Bay Road include tauhou (waxeyes), kotare (kingfisher), karoro (black-backed gull), tarapunga (red-billed gull) and korora (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 Visitor Information Centre on Wakefield Street, Wellington International Airport and the Wellington Railway Station. Brochures are also available by phoning Wellington City Council 04 499 4444, or visit our website www.feelinggreat.co.nz for details.

The "Off Road Mountain Biking in Wellington City" brochures are also available at the Visitor Information Centre, Wakefield Street or check out www.feelinggreat.co.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 restore the city's reserves, bush and coastal areas - and some don't involve getting your hands dirty! Phone 499 4444 or visit www.Wellington.govt.nz for more information.

