

EXPLORE WELLINGTON

Discover Wellington's Town Belt, reserves and walkways



OTHER TRACKS AND WALKS

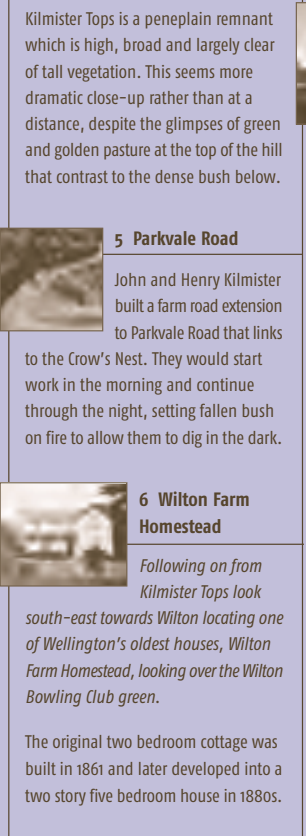


Te Araroa
For some kilometres along the ridges behind the city, the Skyline Track merges with Te Araroa, the National Walkway. Depending on your route, Wellington is the beginning or end of the North Island sector of this magnificent project – a defined track from North Cape to Bluff. Te Araroa means ‘the long pathway’, and that is certainly what this will become: a legal thoroughfare for footsloggers. It is nearly 3000km long across mountains and lowland, through bush and pine forest, by way of all varieties of farm country and local communities, from north to south of New Zealand. The aim is to have it completed by 2008.

A small team of local enthusiasts are working with Wellington City Council and other regional councils to establish and mark the Te Araroa trail from Levin to the top of the Cable Car. Walkers will enter the Wellington City Council section

south of Colonial Knob behind Porirua.
1. From here it joins into Spicer forest and then onto Oharui Valley Road, meeting up with Rifle Range Road. From here along Old Coach Road and up to Mount Kau Kau.
2. Via Bells Track.
3. From here if you wish to walk to the south coast you can join onto the City to Sea Walkway. This will take you to the coast at Island Bay. This at last will give a walk from sea to shining sea – from Cape Reinga*.
** Known to Maori as Te Rerenga Wairua “the leaping place of the spirits” it is believed that after death Maori spirits travel to Cape Reinga where using seaweed as ropes, they slide down the hill to the 800 year old Pohutukawa tree at the northern most tip of the cape. The spirits make their final leap from the tree down to the roots and then return to Hawaiki, the Maori Ancestral Homeland.*
Follow the footsteps!
Bell's Track
This re-established route starts at the top of Awarua Street and joins a farm track up to a saddle on the ridge where

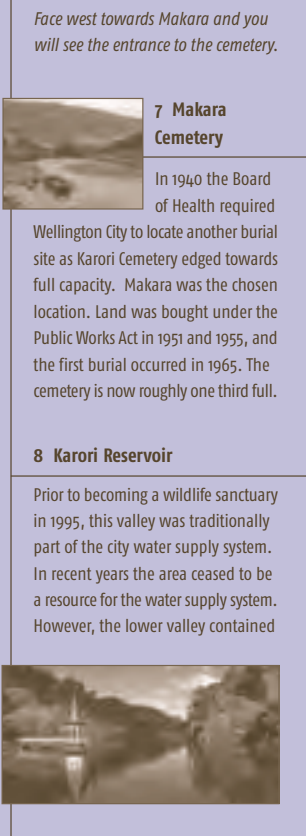
Kilmister Tops is a penneplain remnant which is high, broad and largely clear of tall vegetation. This seems more dramatic close-up rather than at a distance, despite the glimpses of green and golden pasture at the top of the hill that contrast to the dense bush below.
5 Parkvale Road
John and Henry Kilmister built a farm road extension to Parkvale Road that links to the Crow's Nest. They would start work in the morning and continue through the night, setting fallen bush on fire to allow them to dig in the dark.
6 Wilton Farm Homestead
Following on from Kilmister Tops look south-east towards Wilton locating one of Wellington's oldest houses, Wilton Farm Homestead, looking over the Wilton Bowling Club green.
The original two bedroom cottage was built in 1861 and later developed into a two story five bedroom house in 1880s.



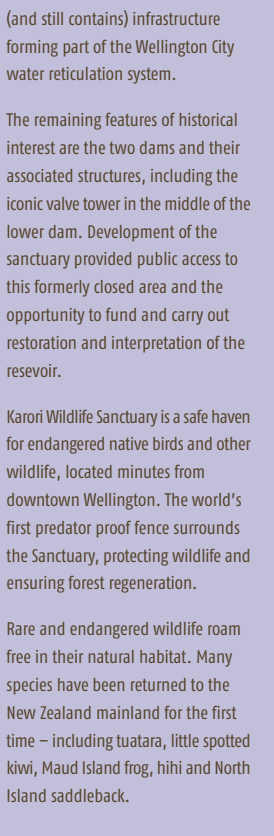
This is the house that can be seen today.
The Wiltons cleared and farmed most of their land that stretched almost to the top of Tinakori Hill, but fenced off an area of 17 acres of forest near their homestead allowing public access. This became a popular leisure destination for people from the city. The Wilton's land was put together with other forested areas purchased in 1905 by Wellington City Council and is still operated today as a recreational destination known as Otari-Wilton's Bush.
This is the only botanic garden in New Zealand completely devoted to native plants. It consists of 100 hectares of plant collection. The forest nestles in the deep valley formed by the Te Mahanga branch of the Kaiwharawhara Stream flowing north-east towards Ngaio Gorge. The long, straight north-western boundary borders steep rural land stretching up to the Te Wharangi ridge on the Skyline.
Photos: Waugh Family Collection in 1920, then 2006 (above).



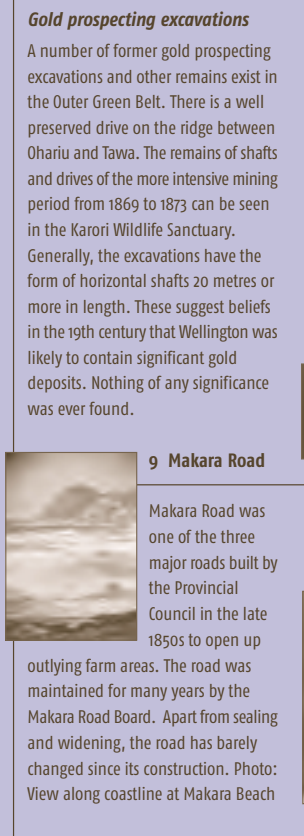
Face west towards Makara and you will see the entrance to the cemetery.
7 Makara Cemetery
In 1940 the Board of Health required Wellington City to locate another burial site as Karori Cemetery edged towards full capacity. Makara was the chosen location. Land was bought under the Public Works Act in 1951 and 1955, and the first burial occurred in 1965. The cemetery is now roughly one third full.
8 Karori Reservoir
Prior to becoming a wildlife sanctuary in 1995, this valley was traditionally part of the city water supply system. In recent years the area ceased to be a resource for the water supply system. However, the lower valley contained
Rare and endangered wildlife roam free in their natural habitat. Many species have been returned to the New Zealand mainland for the first time – including tuatara, little spotted kiwi, Maud Island frog, hihi and North Island saddleback.



(and still contains) infrastructure forming part of the Wellington City water reticulation system.
The remaining features of historical interest are the two dams and their associated structures, including the iconic valve tower in the middle of the lower dam. Development of the sanctuary provided public access to this formerly closed area and the opportunity to fund and carry out restoration and interpretation of the reserve.
Karori Wildlife Sanctuary is a safe haven for endangered native birds and other wildlife, located minutes from downtown Wellington. The world's first predator proof fence surrounds the Sanctuary, protecting wildlife and ensuring forest regeneration.
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Gold prospecting excavations
A number of former gold prospecting excavations and other remains exist in the Outer Green Belt. There is a well preserved drive on the ridge between Ohariu and Tawa. The remains of shafts and drives of the more intensive mining period from 1869 to 1873 can be seen in the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary. Generally, the excavations have the form of horizontal shafts 20 metres or more in length. These suggest beliefs in the 19th century that Wellington was likely to contain significant gold deposits. Nothing of any significance was ever found.
9 Makara Road
Makara Road was one of the three major roads built by the Provincial Council in the late 1850s to open up outlying farm areas. The road was maintained for many years by the Makara Road Board. Apart from sealing and widening, the road has barely changed since its construction. Photo: View along coastline at Makara Beach



1930s (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand).
Makara Hill Windbreak
To reduce the impact of strong winds on traffic passing the summit of Makara Hill Road, the Makara Road Board built a timber windbreak on the north side of the road in 1894. In 1913 the rotting structure was replaced with concrete. It has remained there ever since. The views towards Makara from this site are worth the trip.
Native Birds
At the Makara end of the Skyline you may see Kereru, Tui, Fantail, Morepork, Grey Warblers, Silvereve and even North Island Robin.
New Zealand Falcons may be seen in the vicinity. There is a small population of Kaka from the Karori Wildlife Sanctuary that venture around the city by day. These may also be sighted along the Skyline.



SAFETY AND REGULATIONS

The Skyline Track is a very exposed trail with very little shelter. We strongly recommend considering all weather conditions to be prepared for your journey.

- Warm clothing and stout footwear are essential as weather conditions can be extreme on this very exposed ridgeline
- Be Sunsmart – take a sun hat and sunscreen
- Bring water for hydration
- Pack food
- Reasonable fitness is required
- Mountain Biking is prohibited on Bell's Track, Johnston's Hill, Otari-Wilton's Bush and the Woodmancoate Road, Simla Crescent and Truscott Avenue exit trails of the Northern Walkway.
- There are no toilet or water facilities along the Skyline Track

FARMING OPERATION HAZARDS

1. There is animal grazing in the area, please do not disturb the stock.
2. Use gates and styles, please leave gates as you find them.
3. Dogs must be kept on a leash at all times while using this track. Unleashed dogs may frighten stock or ground nesting birds.
4. On-going predator control.

Dogs must be kept on a leash

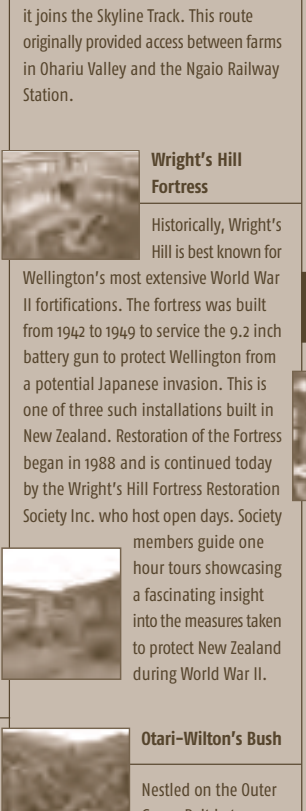
No Litter

No Camping

No Fires

No Mountain Biking

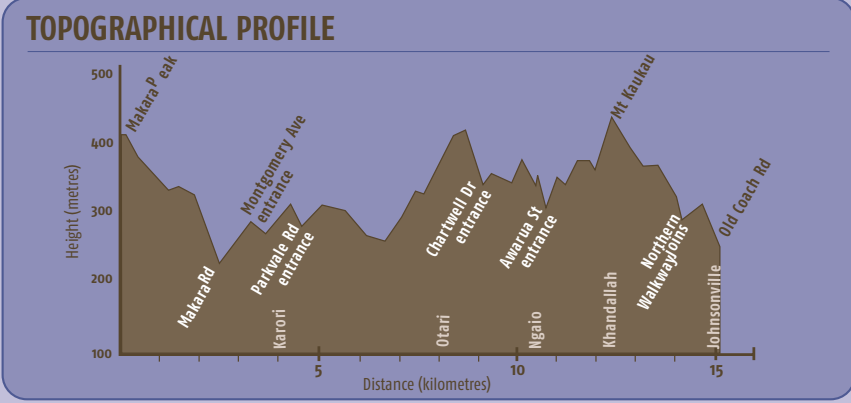
it joins the Skyline Track. This route originally provided access between farms in Ohariu Valley and the Ngaio Railway Station.
Wright's Hill Fortress
Historically, Wright's Hill is best known for Wellington's most extensive World War II fortifications. The fortress was built from 1942 to 1949 to service the 9.2 inch battery gun to protect Wellington from a potential Japanese invasion. This is one of three such installations built in New Zealand. Restoration of the Fortress began in 1988 and is continued today by the Wright's Hill Fortress Restoration Society Inc. who host open days. Society members guide one hour tours showcasing a fascinating insight into the measures taken to protect New Zealand during World War II.
Otari-Wilton's Bush
Nestled on the Outer Green Belt between



Khandallah Park and Johnston's Hill in Karori.
Otari-Wilton's Bush includes a short 75 metre walkway through the forest canopy, a wide range of native plants from around New Zealand and several off shore islands, 10km of walking tracks, and some of Wellington's oldest trees including an 800 year old Rimu.
PARKS & RESERVES
Khandallah Park
The Northern Walkway follows down from Mt Kaukau to one of New Zealand's oldest parks – Khandallah Park, first designated as a domain in 1909. It has more than 60 hectares of native bush with 9km of walking tracks winding through dense bush and passing several lookouts.
Photo: Khandallah swimming pool, tea kiosk and park, 5 January 1931 (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand).



Karori Park
In 1911 the Karori Borough Council acquired several dairy farms and formed Karori Park. Cricket, hockey, bowls & croquet were soon established with a refreshment tent provided. The Park was considered too windy for tennis.
Photo: Hockey match at Karori Park 1950s (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand).
Johnston's Hill
Lying above Otari-Wilton's Bush are the higher eastern slopes and the main ridgeline that links to Johnston's Hill.
The campaign to acquire Johnston's Hill as a reserve was led by Mr S.S.B. Fletcher and Mr George Penlington, both long time residents of Karori. Johnston's Hill was officially opened as a public recreation domain in the middle of World War II, 28 March 1942. It was named after John Johnston who



purchased the land from the first pakeha owner Judge Chapman. Johnston, a Scottish settler with his wife, arrived in Wellington in 1843. The “lookout” was named after Mr Fletcher, today we know it as “Fletcher's Carpark”. Mr Penlington's name was given to the main track through the bush – an appropriate recognition of the work both men had done.
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