



# Heritage Trails

## Highway 2

### Central Hawke's Bay



*Christ Church, Pukehou.*

## Hawke's Bay

Discover <sup>the Real</sup> New Zealand



## Introduction to the Highway Two Trail of Central Hawke's Bay

This Trail runs through Central Hawke's Bay, equidistant from the Ruahine Ranges and the coast. It links the district with Hastings and Napier in the north and Tararua in the south, closely following the early walking tracks.

Travelling the route takes in Waipawa and Waipukurau, with the smaller townships of Otane and Takapau not far off the highway.

Construction of the railway south from Napier began in 1872, providing employment to many immigrants and a direct means of transport to and from Central Hawke's Bay, both for passengers and goods. There were stations at Opapa, Pukehou, Otane and Takapau as well as Waipawa and Waipukurau. These stations were particularly important for farming as the only means of transporting livestock until trucks took over this role after the Second World War. The oak trees that can still be seen at some of the stations were planted to provide fuel for the trains.

There is much to see along the route, you can take all day with the many detours to sites and attractions, so allow plenty of time for stops.

### 1. Te Aute Store

The first signposted building as you enter the trail from the north is the Te Aute store. It was built in 1858 and operated until 1982, giving it the distinction of being New Zealand's longest operating business in a wooden building. It is now a private house. Just south of the hotel is the old Te Aute (Opapa) school, opened in 1889 with 29 pupils. It closed in 1951 and is now also a private house. The first school, mainly for railway worker's children, was opened in 1872 on the same site.



### 2. Christ Church *(pictured on the cover)*

Located over the hill Christ Church was built by the Rev. Samuel Williams in 1859 and is the oldest church in the Waiapu Diocese. The original portion is now part of the nave and additions were made in 1881 and 1893. An oak tree from the grounds was felled and donated to provide timber for the doors of the Waiapu Cathedral in Napier when it was rebuilt following the 1931 earthquake. Regular services ceased in 1983 and it is now a community church used for weddings and cultural activities.

### 3. Te Aute Cemetery

The cemetery is past the church down Boundary Road. It was originally a Maori burial ground and later many early settlers were also buried here.

### 4. Paper Mulberry Cafe

Paper Mulberry is the English name for the Aute tree from which the College and the district take their name. The tree was one of six trees brought from the islands in the migratory canoes. It was used for making tapa cloth but the New Zealand climate was too cold for the tree to thrive and flax was used instead. Originally built as a Sunday School this building was used as the Pukehou Primary School from 1920-1952. It was then used as the Village Hall until 1998 when it was converted into a cafe and gallery.



### 5. Te Aute College

The college was built after the Governor, Sir George Grey, persuaded the Rev Samuel Williams to leave the Otaki Mission in 1853 and establish a school for boys in Hawke's Bay. Sir George promised the Government would give 4000 acres as an endowment, hoping local Maori would do the same. Te Hapuku (one or three Hawke's Bay chiefs to sign the Treaty of Waitangi) and 44 others did so, giving a total of 7397 acres. Although the college has always been open to both Maori and Pakeha boys (and also girls at various times), the role has almost entirely consisted of Maori boys.



The original objectives of the college have been achieved and in 1975 the college was integrated into the state system. It has been largely rebuilt, except for the chapel.

The low-lying land opposite Te Aute College was once Lake Rotoatara with a fortified island pa in the middle. Rotoatara is said to have been discovered by Tara, the first Maori in Hawke's Bay, who declared it his own and over the years it became rich in Maori history. Because of the lake's ample food resources many battles took place.

During the 1880s Archdeacon Samuel Williams purchased the lake and surrounding land with the intention draining it. The scheme was successful and the area is now productive farmland.



*Te Aute College buildings, erected 1871-72.*

## 6. Otane

Otane was originally sited on the main highway just to the north of the turn-off to the present township and known as Kaikora.

Arrival of the railway meant a relocation village and sections were surveyed in 1873 for Kaikora North and sold in 1874.

In 1910 the name changed to Otane avoiding confusion with Kaikoura in the South Island.

Otane was once fully self-sufficient for shopping and today it is well known for its arts and crafts centre established in the old school, built in 1900.

## 7. Waipawa

Six kilometres south is reputedly one of the oldest inland boroughs in New Zealand. By 1854 Frederick S. Abbott, the local runholder, had purchased 60 acres of land from the Government for £40 and on 20 February 1860, submitted the land to public auction.



This was listed as 'The Township or Abbottsford' delightfully situated on the banks of the Waipawa River. The little town grew; and businesses were opened by people whose descendants still live in the district.

At first the area was known by its Maori name, Waipawa. After European settlement, travellers called it Abbottsford, referring to the natural ford across the river. By the early 1870s however, the township was again known as Waipawa.

The Seddon Government's 1894 Act for Closer Settlement saw the surrounding large runs cut up to create scores of new farms, making Waipawa a thriving centre for the increasing rural population.

*See separate Waipawa Pavement Walk brochure*

## 8. Central Hawke's Bay Museum

One of the best small museums of its kind in the country is housed in the historic Bank of New Zealand Building (c.1886).

This facility was gifted to the people of Central Hawke's Bay by the District Council in 1986.

The museum's valuable collection includes a replica 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial cottage, agricultural machinery and implements, a large comprehensive photograph collection and numerous resources for the historian and genealogist.

Open 10am-4pm 7 days

Ph 06 857 7288 [chbmuseum@xtra.co.nz](mailto:chbmuseum@xtra.co.nz)



*CHB Museum, Waipawa.*

## 9. Tapairu

A replica of the country's only railway sign in Maori – 'E.TU – Tītiro Mo Te tima' (stop, look out for the steamer) is seen as Tapairu Road nears the railway line, a short distance from Highway Two south of the



Waipawa River. Originally it marked the entrance to old Tapairu Pa, first settled by Heta Tiki in 1872, and put there for safety as very few residents could read English. The train would stop on request.

Tapairu residents moved from the flat land to higher ground in the early 1880s because of frequent flooding from the Waipawa River. The Church of the Brazen Serpent, built in memory of Hori Ropiha who died in 1898 was completed in 1901.



## 10. Lindsay Bush



This is one of the last remaining stands of bush close to Waipawa and Waipukurau with a good walking track. Access is from the end of Scenic Road, off Lindsay Road near the Tukituki River. Travelling to the bush, you pass Mount Vernon Station, founded in 1852 by John Harding whose descendents still live there.



## 11. Waipukurau

The Pavement Walk traces the the original 'model village' instigated by the town's founder, Henry Russell, who encouraged immigrants to settle in the young town in the 1860s – stipulating only one per trade. Increasing demands by travellers for accommodation at his home at the northern end of Mount Herbert Road, near the site of the original ford crossing from Waipawa, led him to build Avison's Accommodation House at the corner of Wellington and Tavistock Roads. Much of the original building remains as the Tavistock Hotel, relocated in 1915 to the opposite end of town on the corner of Ruataniwha Street and Racecourse Road.



It is believed that Henry Russell pitched his tent on the original site, now named Pioneer Corner, when planning his model village. Today Waipukurau is a service centre to the outlying rural areas of Central Hawke's Bay.



At the corner of Porangahau Road is Post Office Corner Park, a green area which marks the site of



Waipukurau's first post office, built in 1868; the same year as the arrival of the telegraph wire from Wellington.

The first post office, which included the postmaster's residence, was removed to make way for a double storeyed building in 1914. It was demolished in 1992. A 50 year time capsule was buried beside the lawn in 1994.

*See separate Waipukurua Pavement Walk brochure.*

The Trail now has two options, both ending on Marakeke Road.

### Option 1.

Two kilometres south on SH2, turn left into Hatuma Road, right down Waiou Road, left into Marakeke Road through the Hatuma Limeworks. Many fossilised shark's teeth found there are evidence that the area would have been beneath the sea two million years ago.

### Option 2.

Stay on SH2 until turning left, below the hill, up Pukeora Scenic Road for panoramic views of the Tukituki River, Waipukurau and the Ruataniwha plains. Stay on the Scenic Road until it rejoins SH2 and take the next left into Marakeke Road which leads into Oruawharo Road, past the homestead and on to Takapau.



## 12. Oruawharo

Nearing Takapau is Oruawharo, another well known European homestead, part of the station founded by John Johnstone in the early 1850s. Oruawharo became a centre for Victorian and Edwardian 'gentry' social life; constant house-parties were entertained with tennis, croquet and picnics. There were horse races and the hunt was hosted with lavish breakfasts and teas. It also played a role shaping the emerging district and nation. Takapau was established on part



of the station and the Johnstons became ongoing benefactors to the town. The kauri, totara, and matai construction has weathered 139 years and apart from the removal of the servants' wing which housed 12 domestic staff and eight gardeners, Oruawharo today is virtually as Sydney and Sophia knew it. Sydney established the extensive woodlands which remain a feature of the property and in 1899 extended the homestead with a grand billiards room and further bedrooms.

Oruawharo Homestead is open by arrangement. Telephone 06 855 8274 [www.oruawharo.com](http://www.oruawharo.com)

### 13. Takapau

Takapau can lay claim to having the last surviving Ploughing Club in Central Hawke's Bay formed in 1908. Early last century, after the bush had been cleared, ploughing was an important step in breaking in the land for crops and pasture.



*Makotuku Viaduct.*

The annual ploughing matches were great social occasions; rivalry was intense between the landowners as to who had the best ploughmen, teamsters and horses. At the centennial competitions there were still



three horse teams and displays of vintage machinery midst the most modern tractors and ploughs.

The railway reached Takapau in 1877, although it was another 14 years before it was completed to Woodville because the need to build six viaducts over the Manawatu River and its tributaries.



*Railway Station, Waipukurau.*

Again the Trail has options.

You can wander south on the Ormondville Road, passing through the Kopua and Mokotuku areas. Like most railway settlements they once had sizeable populations working on the lines and bridges. You can rejoin SH2 again at several points.

The second option is to join SH2 from Takapau and head north or south.

The third option is to head south after joining SH2 and, after a short distance, take the SH50 road to the right, taking you along that Heritage Trail, towards Hastings and Napier.

### Progression of the railway through Central Hawke's Bay

#### Stations opened:

Te Aute (Opapa)	Feb. 1876
Otane	May 1876
Waipawa	Aug. 1876
Waipukurau	Sept. 1876
Takapau	Mar. 1877
Kopua	Jan. 1878

The line is still an important link for the Port of Napier so freight trains are all you will see as you drive along SH2. The exciting moment is to see one of the 'steam specials' out for an excursion.

## Books for future reference:

*Pioneer Trails, Early Sheep Stations of Hawke's Bay*,  
Miriam Macgregor

*History of Hawke's Bay*, J.G. Wilson

*Road to Porangahau*, J.G. Wilson

*Abbotsford*, Margaret Gray

*Samuel Williams of Te Aute*, Sybil Woods

*Opening The Gate*, Te Aute and Pukehou Historical  
Trust

*Takapau – The Sovereign Years 1856-1876*, Warren  
Bayliss

*A Hundred and One Years of Ormondville*,  
D. Ropiha and S. Playle

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Historic Places Trust

CHB Central Hawke's Bay



Visitor Information Centre

## Other CHB Heritage Trails:

Coastal Trail

Highway 2 Trail

Waipawa and Waipukurau Pavement Walks