



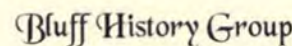
Heritage Trail

Bluff Heritage Trail



Sir Joseph Ward Statue

the Real Discover New Zealand



Welcome to the Bluff Heritage Trail

In 1824 James Spencer landed at Bluff to found one of the earliest settlements in New Zealand.

The first European name for the town was "The Mount" followed by "Old Mans Bluff", the term 'old man' from the Celtic meaning High Rock. This was eventually dropped and became "The Bluff". Maori called it an island "Motupohue" or the 'Island of Convolvulus'. In 1856 it was changed again to Campbelltown and then officially became Bluff on 1st March 1917.

Bluff is a small town snuggled at the foot of Bluff Hill's 867 ft. It is nestled beside a wonderful harbour and is steeped in the history of whaling, sealing and shipping.

From the magnificent hilltop viewing platform there are panoramic views of Stewart Island, Ruapuke and Dog Islands, Tiwai Peninsula, Centre Island and the southern mountains - a sight not to be missed.

The trail commemorates the life of Bluff's most famous son, Sir Joseph Ward, with many sites having connections to the Ward family. Joseph Ward began his working life at the age of 13 years. Entering politics in 1878 when he was elected to the Bluff Borough Council, he served as Mayor of Bluff from 1881 - 1888 and again from 1897 - 1898. A member of the Bluff Harbour Board from 1881 - 1917 and serving as chairman from 1883 - 1887 and again from 1893 - 1894. Elected to Parliament as a member for Awarua in 1887 he became a cabinet minister for the first time in 1891. Joseph Ward was Prime Minister between 1906 - 1912 and 1928 - 1930, when he resigned due to poor health, dying later that year.

The trail covers 20kms and as you travel there are many other attractions not to be overlooked - the small Ocean Beach Church on Nichol Road, small craft moored at the head of the harbour, and be sure to take the opportunity of tasting our succulent Bluff oysters and seafood.

The Bluff Heritage Trail is guaranteed to be a half-day well spent.

A project of Bluff History Group.



✳ Denotes a New Zealand Historic Places Trust Site



1. Greenhills Church ❁

Built in 1886 on a small triangular section of land gifted by Mr S Sullivan, who also did most of the construction work. The outside is weatherboard and the interior timber walls and ceiling hand dressed, varnished tongue and groove rimu from local sawmills. Windows and doors are gothic shape. After being built the church was used as a classroom until Greenhills School was built in 1889. A room was added as a vestry and electricity installed around 1925. Decommissioning of the church took place on 11th March 2001. It has a Category 2 registration with the NZ Historic Places Trust.



2. Greenpoint Walkway & Ship's Graveyard



A wealth of human and natural history is to be discovered on this quiet stretch of Bluff Harbour. From the 13th century manufacture of stone tools by early Maori to trade with the first whaling and sealing boats in the 19th century, Shipwreck Bay is

noted for its historic value. Once proud veterans of the Bluff oyster and fishing fleets have been scuttled here, some dating back to the 1870's. Many of the wrecks are still visible today and at low tide these hulls can be clearly seen.

3. Oyster Boat "Monica II" - Bluff Maritime Museum

Auckland's Charles Bailey Jnr built "Monica II" as a steamer in 1909 for Thomas Humstalk and Monica Thacker of Lyttleton. After working round the bays of Banks Peninsula from 1910 - 1920, she was sold to Northern Wairoa Dairy Co-op Ltd. Between 1929 - 1930 she worked for Pencarrow Quarries Ltd of Wellington and in 1930 was bought and converted into a fishing boat by Alfred Thompson of Westport. She was brought to Bluff in 1937 by Stewart Island Canneries (Ozone Oysters).



In 1947 her engines were replaced by two 165 BHP Grey Marine diesels and she became the fastest boat in the Bluff fleet. Stan Jones Jnr donated "Monica II" as a permanent display to Bluff Maritime Museum in 1998. The museum opening hours are Mon - Fri 10.00am - 4.30pm, Sat - Sun 1.00pm - 5.00pm.

4. Statue of Sir Joseph Ward 1856 - 1930

Joseph Ward and his family migrated to Bluff from Emerald Hill, Melbourne when Joseph was four years of age. He was educated at Campbelltown (Bluff) School. From a humble start at age 13, as a Post Office messenger boy, he was later to become a very astute businessman and owned many properties in Bluff and Invercargill. For a time he also worked for the railways before becoming a full time politician. The statue, c.1929, is the work of Auckland sculptor Feldon.



5. Old Bluff Cemetery

A leisurely stroll through this cemetery provides a fascinating insight into Bluff's past. Elaborately sculpted angels and ornate iron fences abound, while the use of granite from local quarries and white gravel from Awarua Bay sets the Bluff cemetery apart from others. The headstones tell a story of their own - deaths in childbirth, stillborn babies, infant mortalities and drownings at sea - contrast with extreme longevity. Death as a result of war wounds and those who died of the 1918 influenza epidemic add another sad chapter. The land was defined as a cemetery in 1863 and designated as such in 1869. The first known burial was of John Fox Overingham on 3rd December 1860. Prior to this date the dead were buried in an area of sand hills near where the Bluff Town Hall now stands.



Now return to the main street to continue the trail.



6. J G Ward Store Building

Joseph Ward had substantial sheds capable of storing 20,000 sacks of wheat or grain in place by 1887. Seven years later he could store 100,000 sacks at the site along with wool and skins purchased from northern farmers. After paying cash for these goods he would arrange for their export through the Port of Bluff taking a risk that a profit would eventually be made. Largely using profits from trading, Ward and his wife built up substantial holdings of prime waterfront real estate, eventually owning 25 of the 66 sections of commercial Bluff land.

7. 84 Foyle Street

Known as "Chez Nous" or 'Our Place', this delightful bay villa was built during the 1870's for the De Smidt family of Golden Age Hotel fame. A superb home with many classic features remaining today including lovely leadlight windows and ornate plaster ceiling centrepiece in the lounge. Theresa Dorothea De Smidt's marriage to Joseph Ward in 1893 was held in the front room. An extensive remodelling took place in the 1920's altering the front by shortening the veranda. Household staff used another small building behind the main residence.



8. 90 Bann Street

Set on one acre of land, which was granted to James Waddel on 12th February 1875, it was known as "Tai-nui". This ex-Waddel family home is the finest example of colonial architecture in Bluff and remained in Waddel ownership for over 100 years. "Tai-nui" enjoys a panoramic view over Bluff Harbour and comprises 5 bedrooms, 2 sunrooms, large living room, lounge, spacious kitchen, scullery, pantry and a hallway that is 56ft in length. There is also a large outbuilding, which would have been the original laundry, coal shed and workshop. Following the death of Guy Waddel in 1986 the property left Waddel ownership for the first time in its long history.



9. Memorial Grove

Adjoining Flagstaff Road, at the beginning of the ascent to Bluff Hill, nestles Bluff Memorial Grove. It is a grass area with crosses in memory of our fallen servicemen. The land was designated a Servicemen's Memorial c1946. Twenty-five trees were planted in the grove by school children during 1946 and were dedicated to the memory of these servicemen by the Rev. T.A.G. Day. He charged the children to take care of the trees that were different species to those growing elsewhere on the hill. A further 300 trees were also planted by the children that day around the perimeter of the grove.



10. Radar Station

Upon reaching hill top carpark turn right and you will find this site marked by the bush line.

During World War II, on 24th January 1940, with successful installations demonstrated on land, sea and air, Prime Minister Peter Fraser approved installation of two more C. D. (Coastal Defence) and five early warning radar sets. One of these Coastal Defence sets was to be used by naval personnel to control Foveaux Strait. Their role was to 'watch strategic waterways for any unusual movement'.



The Public Works Department transported and assembled the buildings, masts, gearboxes and power generating equipment. These first radars were already out of date when installed, as they were unable to detect small targets, motor torpedos and submarines. By mid-1941 they had been upgraded with sets capable of ranges up to 30 miles. In 1944 the radar was retained for daylight use only with nights on 20 minutes standby. The installation was closed down in January 1944.



11. Ex Post Office

The Post Office was opened by the Post Master General and local Member of Parliament the Hon. J G Ward on 21st November 1900. Joseph Ward was the driving force behind the construction of this imposing building. A large area of upper storey was intended to be used as a courtroom. The ground floor consisted of the public office, mailroom, postmaster's office and telephone exchange. At the time of opening, all South Island mail was landed and distributed from Bluff. It is interesting to note that 75,985 letters were posted at Bluff in 1899.

12. Club Hotel

Designed by Peter Walker, the Club Hotel was built for Hannah Ward Barron, mother of Sir Joseph Ward. Surviving several fires over the years, the old world charm is still retained today with the stairway featuring wrought iron filigree and ornate pressed copper wall and ceiling panels. The two deep ornate timber archways in the upstairs hall are evidence of extensions to the east and west sides over the years. Elaborate copper ceiling and plaster centrepieces are also features of the accommodation area. It has a Category 2 registration with the NZ Historic Places Trust.



13. Old Town Wharf & Tide Gauge Building

The original wharf was built in 1863 with an eastern limb only. A 200ft extension to the west was added in 1872. Shortly after the Bluff Harbour Board was formed in 1876 two further contracts were let for extensions to the west, bringing the total wharf length to 1613ft. Access was from the main wharf entrance, while a curved link to the west carried railway lines and formed a basin where small fishing vessels moored. Several fishing companies had their offices and processing sheds on the nearby foreshore. Customs, shipping agents and the watersider's canteen known as the 'Louse House' were located on or close to the wharf. A shed housing the tide gauge is still standing today.



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14. Bayview Hotel

Built for Mr Joseph Metzger in 1892, on the southeastern corner of Palmer and Gore Streets. It is a two-storey building, which initially had four guest bedrooms. In the early days the hotel had a stable, workshop, lawn and large vegetable garden at the rear. Mr Metzger operated the hotel until 1908, leasing it out thereafter until the executors of his estate sold it in 1938. There have been well in excess of two dozen proprietors or licensees during the hotel's many years of operation.



15. War Memorial

Sited on Marine Parade, opposite Tiwai Peninsula, the memorial was built of Bluff granite, quarried from a site in McDougall Street. It was crafted by a team of Danish stonemasons and was unveiled by Prime Minister W F Massey on 6th April 1924. The memorial commemorates the men of Bluff who lost their lives in three wars. The north side bearing the names of those who died in World War II and the Korean War. The south side bears the names of those forty-six men who died in the Great War of 1914-1918. A further twelve names are on the east side and two on the west side.



16. Bluff Gunpit Coastal Defence Camp

Situated at the end of Gunpit Road and through the gate, veer left and follow the track a short distance and you will find Bluff Gunpit. The Army selected this area in April 1942, with urgent instructions being issued for the construction of an access road, which was completed



on 27th June 1942. The Public Works Department was notified of the type of installation required and local builder Charlie Beaton carried out the work, at a cost of £15,085. The strength of concrete used in the emplacement exceeded 3,000lbs per square inch. The buildings consisted of gun mountings, overhead cover and magazines, battery observation post, sleeping quarters, ablutions, wash and bathhouses, mess rooms and stores. Complete with water, sewage, drainage and fencing. Work was completed on 30th September 1942 and the Army moved in at 1700hrs on 11th December 1942. The Battery was closed in August 1944.

17. Stirling Point



Named after Captain William Stirling, the area was originally home to a whaling station established by Stirling for Johnny Jones in 1836. The world famous Stirling Point signpost attracts many thousands of visitors each year. It was originally built of timber c1960, with six direction arms to Dog Island, Ruapuke Island, South Pole, Wellington, Sydney and London. Due to repeated vandalism it was replaced in metal and cemented in place. Today's version gives directions to twelve locations including Invercargill's sister city Kumagaya, Japan. The Stirling Point Pilot Station is also nearby and can be accessed via the coastline.

