

HERITAGE
TRAILS

Heritage Trails

Highway 50

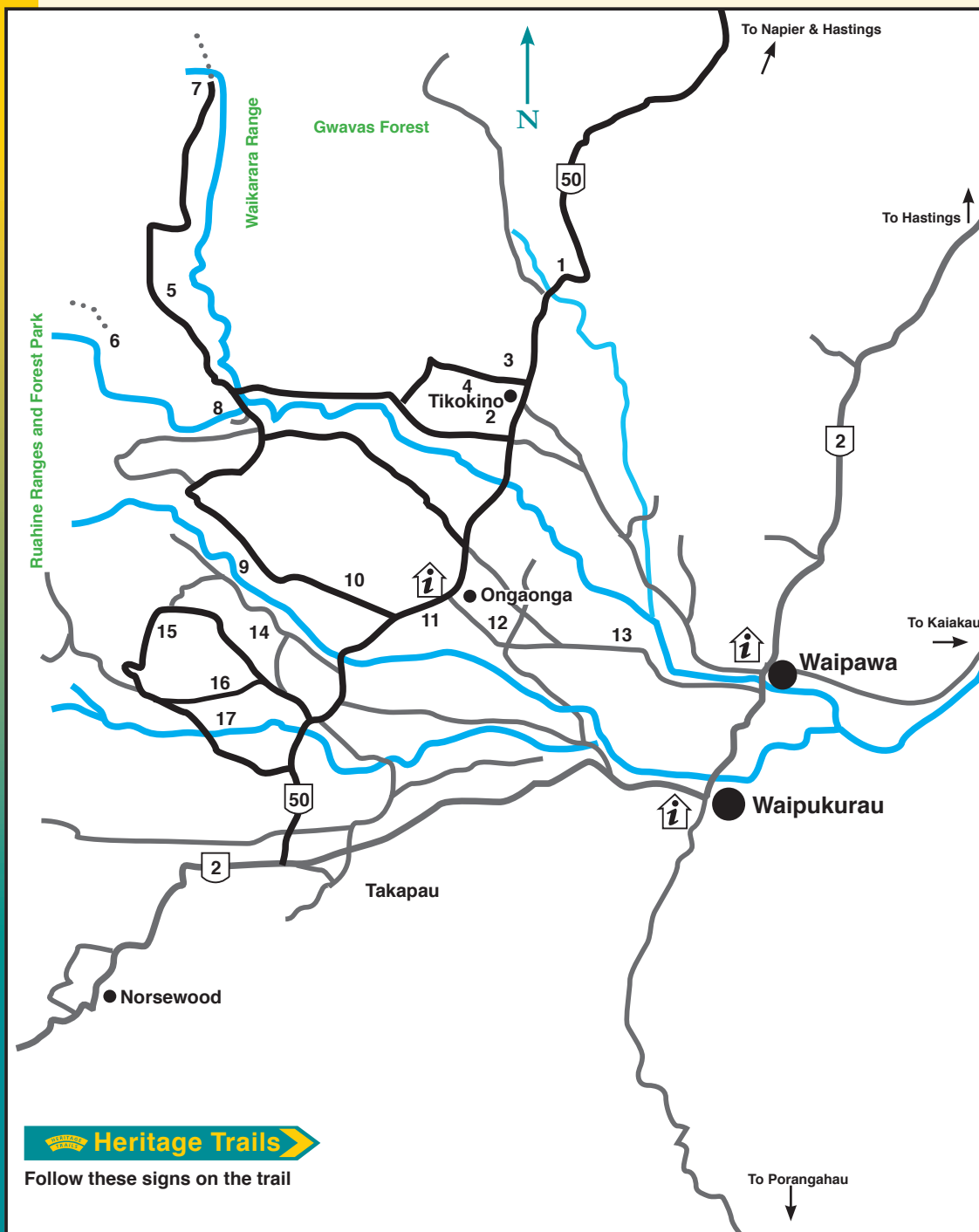
Central Hawke's Bay



Scattered totara giving a park-like effect on grazing land.

Hawke's Bay

the Real
Discover  New Zealand



Key to map:

1. Gwavas Garden Homestead
2. Information and HT plaque
3. Sawyers Arms Hotel
4. Tikokino Cemetery
5. North Block Road Junction
6. Ruahine Forest Park huts and tracks
7. Site of old Gardner/ Yeoman mill. Ford access to Ellis and other huts and tracks.
8. Pendle Hill Road, private cemetery, cairn, and old homestead site
9. The Bibby Family Memorial Church
10. Forest Gate Cemetery
11. Forest Gate Domain
12. Historic Village of Ongaonga and Museum complex
13. Ruataniwha cairn
14. A'Deane's Bush
15. Makaretu Cemetery
16. Ashley Clinton Cemetery
17. Monkton's Scenic Reserve

Fuel at Ongaonga.
 Driving time: non-stop 2-3 hours
 Numerous ideal areas for picnics



Follow these signs on the trail

Introduction to the Highway 50 Trail of Central Hawke's Bay

Dense native bush once covered much of inland Bay. The trail area was developed into farmland by the cutting, clearing and milling of the bush. Tracks were laid to enable steam haulers, bullocks and horses to pull the logs out to the saw mills. (Some logs were sawn into planks over pits; the person at the bottom having to endure the falling debris without modern safety gear!)



Steam Hauler with logs.

At one stage 15 sawmills were working in the Tikokino district.

The Ruahine Ranges and Forest Park (RFP) provide a dramatic backdrop to the west, and several excellent bush reserves still contain magnificent specimens of lowland podocarp bush.

Back here is the unique 'totara country', with the scattered trees giving a park-like effect over grazing farms. (See cover photo).



Horse team with kahikatea logs.

Gradually, as mechanised transport took over from horses and bullocks, the prosperous days of small rural townships faded; but the cleared land was being taken up for farming. Many of these settlers were from the British Isles, and by 1900 had built large homesteads on their stations. There are still old buildings remaining in Tikokino and Ongaonga: glimpses may also be caught of historic homesteads



and woolsheds from the prosperous farming days that followed the sawmilling ones.

1. Gwavas Garden Homestead

The Carlyon family arrived in New Zealand from Cornwall, England, in 1856, and settled on the station in 1858, having built a cottage from pit-sawn native timbers.

By 1890 the family had outgrown this, so Tilleard Natusch, the renowned architect, was engaged to design a large homestead. This began as a single storey and was soon extended to a second one in 1900.

The Carlyons brought with them the passion for planting rare and unusual trees and shrubs, so it was a natural thing to lay out a Cornish woodland garden in the 1880s as a setting for the planned homestead.



Gwavas Homestead.

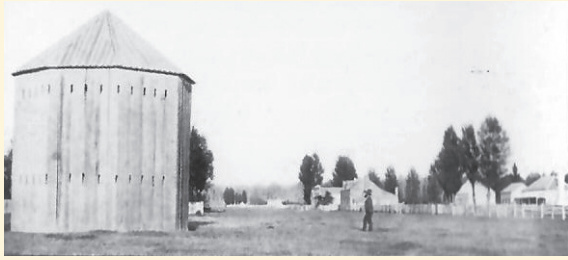
This garden is now designated an area of 'Notable and Historic Trees', and exciting planting still continues.

The area of native bush on the station (now protected) yielded magnificent timber for the construction of the houses and buildings, totara and matai being the main species used. The Historic Places Trust has recognised the homestead as having some of the finest interior totara panelling in New Zealand.

Gwavas Garden Homestead is open by arrangement. Ph 06-8565-810. www.gwavasgarden.co.nz.

2. Hampden-Tikokino

By 1860 Charles Weber had surveyed Tikokino, then called Hampden Town. To avoid confusion with two other South Island places of the same name, the name or the Maori settlement nearby was adopted by 1909. The Wellington-Napier railway was planned to pass through the township in 1870. Many of the sections were sold in anticipation, but were never developed when the line was laid further east, reaching Waipawa by 1876. (Refer Highway 2 Trail). Despite this



Tikokino Blockhouse.

setback to development, Tikokino had a thriving saw-milling industry and the military had barracks here. There were stores, blacksmiths, a tailor, baker, a library, several churches and much entertainment was enjoyed at the Theatre Royal.

An octagonal blockhouse was built from totara slabs as a refuge in the Land Wars of 1868-69 to protect the women and children. It can't have been much fun in there for them, crowded fearfully upstairs, with the heat and mosquitoes.

After the scare of warfare was over, the building was demolished by the mid 1880s, and the timber used for road culverts.

All that remains of that era today is the hotel, private cottages and what is left of Old Flynn's Store, but it is well worth driving round the village and seeing the old homes, many restored, and noting the spacious sections and wide streets. There is a Heritage Trails history plaque on the side of the kiosk by the hall gates.

3. The Sawyers Arms Hotel

The first hotel opened under a 'bush licence' in the general store in Owen Street. By the 1880s it was on its present site with an accommodation block on the south end. The present hotel is thought to be a combination of the two buildings with additions. A good view of the still existing gables is from Buckland Street. The public areas of the interior have recently been refurbished.



Original Sawyers Arms Hotel.

4. Tikokino Cemetery

This was moved here in 1903 after the site of the original one became unsuitable. Many of the old families have descendants of the same name still living in the district.

Continue towards the 500,000 year old Ruahine Ranges. Their erosion, much of it entirely natural, causes the unsightly scars.

5&6. North Block Road Junction

Refer pages 20-23 in Eastern Ruahine Forest Park pamphlet and turn left for the RFP and Triplex/Sunrise/Waipawa huts and track. The road is across private farmland.

A right turn at the junction takes you just over five kilometres to the road end. Wonderful views of the Ruahines on left, and the hill grazing country rising to the Wakarara Range on the right.

(This is partly managed by DOC for conservation purposes. The rest is the 8000ha Gwavas Forest, bought by the government in 1946 for pinus radiata planting, now privately managed.)



Gardner and Yeoman Mill in 1927.

7. The Site of the old Gardner and Yeoman Sawmill and Makaroro River

(Check the condition of the steep road down. There is space to park at the top if necessary). The photo above is of the site of the busy mill in 1927. The men had just finished the 12 span bridge across which the horses dragged the huge logs. 18 families lived here, with their own school. It was not the only mill up here but was the last to close in 1961.

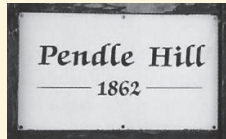
Refer the ERFPP pamphlet & check the river flow before crossing to reach Yeoman's Track and Ellis Hut, where an accused murderer holed up for nine months in 1904.

William Colenso, the famous missionary, followed the Makaroro River as early as 1845, using Maori tracks

to visit his parishioners of Inland Patea. He was, amongst many things, a botanist and printer, and wrote the first records of this area. There is a cairn on Colenso Spur in recognition of his exploits.

8. Pendle Hill Road

This is a no exit road, restricted turning, cars only. Samuel and Harriet Fletcher were the first to settle here, being allotted the land in 1862.



They named it Pendle Hill, as it reminded them strongly of the place they had left in England. With the help of the NZHP Trust their descendants have erected a cairn on the site of their first home.

Visitors are allowed here, and up at the cemetery. Please respect the atmosphere of this special place. DOC relocated part of the second homestead to Ongaonga, restoring it for use as their Field Centre in the Museum complex.

The most scenic route now is down Blackburn Road via Hardy Road. The views from up here are stunning! Most of Hawk's Bay lies before you, and behind you are the Ruahine and Wakarara Ranges.

9. Bibby Family Memorial Church

This was built in 1911 by Edward Bibby as a memorial to his parents. It was up here, in the 1870s, that they began to clear the land to establish their property of 'Lunesdale'. It was a descendant, E.S. (Ted) Bibby, who was the driving force in setting up the Ongaonga Old School Museum.



10. Forest Gate Cemetery

In 1902 the government bought four acres (1.6 hectares) of land for this use from the adjoining fanning property.

11. Forest Gate Domain

Back on SH50 and opposite Forest Gate itself, once owned by Colonel Herrick, is the 105 acre (42.5 hectare) domain. In 1902 his widow gifted some of the land for this and the district the rest. It is run by a board which has improved the facilities for the use of the local sports clubs. There is a 9-hole golf course, which is attractively planted.

12. Ongaonga

Te ongaonga is the Maori name for the native stinging nettle; also the stream beside the village. The NZHP Trust has recognised the importance of the remaining historic buildings, facades, houses, churches and the war memorial; many have category listings.



Main Street, Ongaonga, circa 1927.

The village formed at the junction of four early tracks from Takapau, Waipukurau, Waipawa and Tikokino. People began to settle here in the 1850s. In 1869 James Newman built a store, followed by the Sandford Hotel in 1879. Henry Bridge laid out a village of 78 sections in 1872, taking this land from his extensive Fairfield property.

By early 1900 Ongaonga was in its bustling heyday. The commercial centre had over 16 businesses, people enjoyed a wealth of public services, had a hall and library and listened to their own brass band.

Henry Bridge gave more land for a park, built one of the three churches and the first school in 1874.

This shingle-roofed schoolroom remains firmly on its original site, and around it have gathered several interesting buildings from elsewhere, all forming the 'museum complex'.

The exhibits housed here cover the diversity of everyday colonial country life. Even the police jail cells from Waipukurau have been converted into modern toilets!

The museum is open on Sundays, 2-4pm.
Contact: Telephone 06 8566-735.

DOC Field Centre

In here are visual displays, including one of the restored building and the Fletcher family; also maps and information pamphlets. The Eastern RFP one is really important if you want to head into the Park, and Hut passes are available too. If arrangements change, the pamphlet and pass will be available at the store, still operating from behind its elegant Edwardian frontage.

Open 7 days a week. Pb 06 8566-808.

Henry Bridge continued to encourage development, opening a large flour mill using the locally grown wheat.

Its boiler arrived in Napier on the *HMS Stormbird* in 1879, from the Murray Foundry in Wanganui. Unfortunately the costs of using wood as fuel were too high, and by 1914 it had closed. A dairy factory also helped the local economy, supplied by creameries at Ruataniwha and Wakarara.



Flour Mill.

Coles Brothers' Joinery Factory

(Now privately owned)

Edward Coles built it in 1877, employed 17 men and erected many of the houses and churches round about. He was also a joiner, ironmonger, undertaker and fathered 16 children!

At the eastern end of Bridge Street stands an Italian marble soldier. This distinctive war memorial reflects the significant contribution from the region to two world wars.

13. Ruataniwha Cairn

(9 kms on Ongaonga Road towards Waipawa.) This marks the site on which the Ruataniwha Hall stood for 73 years. It, together with the nearby school, served as the focus of the social life of this community, long since gone. The cairn was built by district residents, and dedicated on 5th July, 1996. The site plaque has the history of the hall, school, stockade, creamery and Postal and Telegraph bureau. Return to Highway 50 and continue south for ten kilometres. Then turn right up Makaretu Road.



Ashley Clinton - Makaretu

These two districts were once separate communities, each supporting its own amenities. Now there is but one school, at Sherwood, and no store or churches.

The original settlers here were allotted 40 acres (16.18 ha) of standing bush per family.

From this they were expected to create a home, and sufficient grazing from which to make a living. It is a testament to their skills, courage, and perseverance that the mainly Scandinavian immigrants succeeded.

14. A'Deane's Bush

On this flat river terrace is one of the last stands or the lowland forest. In here are superb trees of great age and splendour. Matai, miro, kahikatea, all of which are good bird food for the tui, bellbirds and pigeons.

Five minutes along the one kilometre path is the HUGE totara; one of the biggest in Hawkes Bay, at 33 metres tall. It is probably 700 years old. What was happening in the world when that little seed germinated?



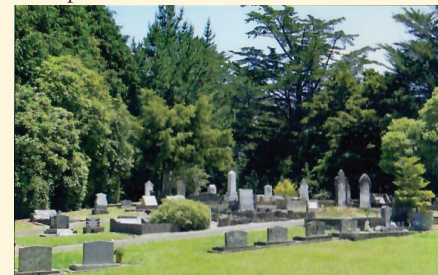
Huge Totara in A'Deane's Bush.

15. Makaretu Cemetery

A place to pause to try and imagine the isolation when tall bush covered all.

16. Ashley Clinton Cemetery

This is a magically peaceful spot, and much can be learnt of those early days from the tombstones and inscriptions.



Ashley Clinton Cemetery.

17. Monkton's Scenic Reserve

This was gifted by C.D. Monkton in 1979. The 16.5 hectares of mixed forest contains good birdlife. There are two kilometres of walkway and the Tangarewai Stream runs through it.

Abbreviations

RFP Ruahine Forest Park.

DOC Department. of Conservation.

VIC Visitor Information Centre.



Historic Places Trust

CHB Central Hawke's Bay



Visitor Information Centre

The Central Hawke's Bay Museum in Waipawa is one of the best of its kind in the country. It houses numerous collections from early Maori times to items that you might still find in your Grandmother's kitchen! The exhibits reflect the lifestyles, professions and trades of the early settlers.

Open 10am-4pm 7 days.

Telephone 06 8577-288.

Email: chbmuseum@xtra.co.nz.

Books for future reference:

Early Stations of Hawke's Bay, Miriam Macgregor

Tikokino, a History, Sally Butler & Judy Mathews

Hawke's Bay for the Happy Wanderer, Sheila Cunningham

Village of the Plains, M.C. & E.S. Bibby, Ongaonga Museum

Acknowledgements:

HB Regional Council

CHB District Council

Ongaonga Historical Society

Hastings District Heritage Trails Committee

Other CHB Heritage Trails:

Coastal Trail

Highway 2 Trail

Waipawa and Waipukurau Pavement Walks