



Heritage Trails

Inland Patea
Hastings - Taihape

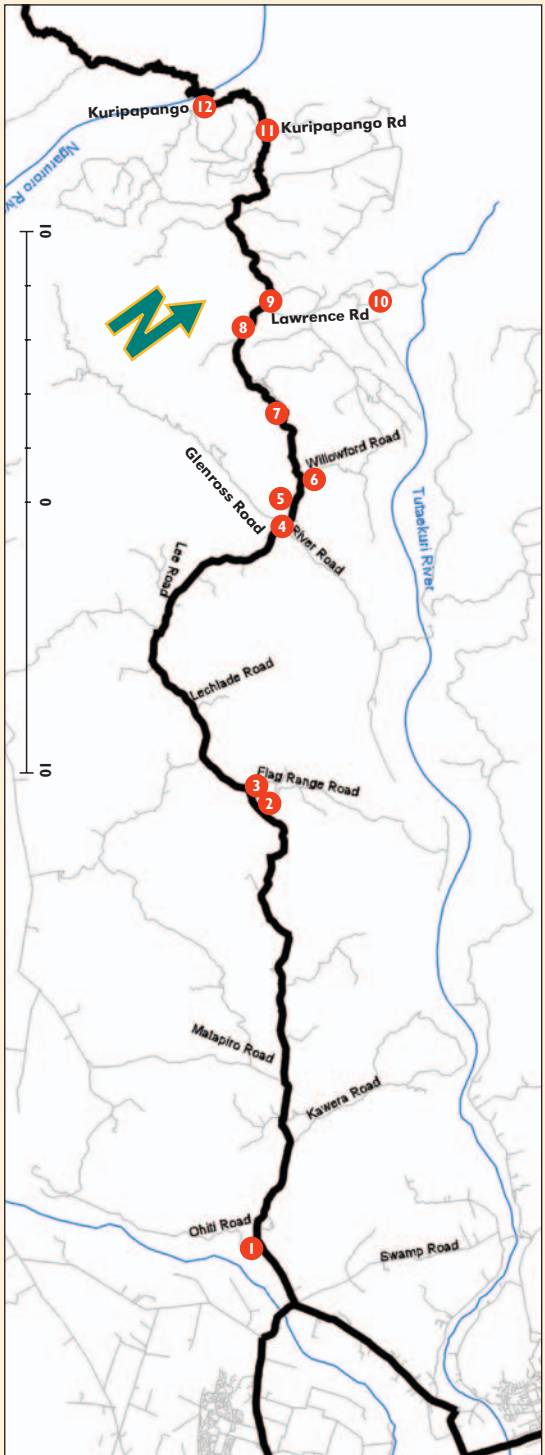
Hawke's Bay



Kuripapango Bridge

Ivan Hughes

the Real
Discover  New Zealand



Heritage Trail


Inland Patea
Hastings-Taihape

Hawke's Bay

Take a Wander through History and Rugged Grandeur. Follow the Scenic Inland **Patea Heritage Trail**.

This is a co-operative venture created by the Hastings and Rangitikei District Heritage Trails Committees to introduce people to the beautiful Hawke's Bay and Rangitikei.

Arriving in Hastings the skyline to the west is dominated by the Kaweka Ranges with places of great beauty and historical interest. The Inland Patea Heritage Trail is well signposted with distinctive teal coloured signs lettered in yellow, directing travellers to places of interest while passing through a segment of Hawke's Bay with a character of its own. Here deep earth movements have constructed a unique landform of mountain scenery with limestone features supporting unusual forest.

Trail Information: Taihape Information Centre, AA Taihape, Sportsworld Taihape and from Hastings and Napier  sites.

Distances: The distance to Taihape is 135km; To Kuripapango 57.5km or approximately 135km return if side visits included. Hastings - Kuripapango 12kms is unsealed. Hastings - Taihape 34kms is unsealed. Heritage Trail distances shown in red e.g. (103km) are from the intersection of Swamp, Korokipo (SH50) and Taihape Roads at Omahu, (10km NW of Hastings), those in blue (97.6km) are from Taihape. Note: If you take any side spurs, add the return kms to further distances.

Petrol/diesel is only available at Hastings & Taihape.

Travelling Time: Non stop, the Heritage Trail can be driven to Taihape in 2.5 hours or as far as Gentle Annie and return in 3 hours. It is suggested, with stops to visit sites, a full day is taken but to walk the many tracks allow a day for each one.

Accommodation: Mangaweka also Hastings & Taihape.

Eateries: Cafes, Tea Rooms, Restaurants at Hastings, Taihape & Mangaweka.

Hunting: Check with Department of Conservation, 59 Marine Parade, Box 644, Napier, Ph. (06) 834 3111, for hunting permits and copy of Kaweka Forest Park map.

Fishing: Anglers have access to a wide variety of angling experiences in the Ngaruroro river system, which provides over 100km of fishable water. For information contact Fish & Game, Taradale, Ph. (06) 844 2460 or visit www.fishandgame.org.nz

The Taihape Road follows the route of an old Maori track from the Heretaunga Plains to the Inland Patea. This huge tract of high land stretches westward across the Hawke's Bay ranges to the gorges of the Whanganui River and from a line running roughly on the base of Mount Ruapehu to south of the present town of Taihape.

According to Maori legend, Patea came by its name long before the coming of the European. Patea was a Maori living with his woman and kinsfolk at Waimarama, southeast of Hastings. It is told that Patea went on a hunting expedition and was away for a long time. He returned with a poor bag, to find that his woman had filled the storehouse herself. She soon used her scolding tongue with incessant nagging to let Patea know how bad a hunter he was, but this time she went too far. Patea took her for a walk and somehow she fell over a cliff to her death. Rather than face her relatives, Patea fled into the wild lonely country west of the ranges, where he remained for the rest of his life in Patea's Country.

From the 1860s until 1908 when the Main Trunk Railway was opened, the Inland Patea looked upon Napier as its town and port with, at first pack horses, and then wagon trains, hauling supplies and produce over the ranges. Wool was the main commodity and by the 1870s, when the huge inland sheep runs became fully stocked with immense flocks of merino sheep, transport was an enormous undertaking.

To offer some idea; the Birch brothers moved from Waimarama in 1867 to take up a 20-year lease on Erewhon Station which covered 48,563 hectares and carried 75,000 to 80,000 sheep. Once these sheep had

been sheared, the wool was carried to Napier on long strings of packhorses, or mules, with one man in charge of each team of ten, one animal in five carrying fodder for the team and supplies for the packmen. Each pack animal carried 90 kg. The work was dangerous and if, as occasionally happened, a beast missed its step negotiating the narrow rocky track over the precipitous Gentle Annie, it bounced to its end in the Ngaruroro Gorge at least a hundred metres below. All the packman could do was to hurry the rest of his team along before they panicked and plunged over the edge. Riding ahead of the train was a hunter, with his dogs, who would try to shoot a wild pig or turkey to offer some food variety.

On the return, there were supplies and mail to be carried to the inland sheep stations and the gangs surveying a route for the Main Trunk Railway. The inland pack-track was probably the longest and busiest in New Zealand until gold fever struck members of the Hawke's Bay County Council. The lure of gold had seen great improvements in inland roads of the South Island and now, with Sir James Hector, Otago Provincial geologist, predicting payable gold would be found in the Kaimanawa Ranges, a wagon road was driven towards the mountains.

In late 1884, word went out of a payable gold find in the Inland Patea. Agent, W.G. Motley raised a £1000 share capital but within days of the road being opened, in January 1885, he disappeared leaving several poorer but wiser men. Just what had happened to the Pioneer Gold Mine?

The Trail begins at the Omahu Marae, settled in the 14th century. During the early 1800s Ngapuhi, a Maori tribe, took prisoner their chief, Renata Kawepo, in the 1820s invasion of Hawke's Bay



from the Bay of Islands, north of Auckland. There he made a name for himself as a wrestler and when ransom was paid, returned to Hawke's Bay with William Colenso to become one of his lay-readers. He was responsible for building, across the road, the Anglican

Renata Kawepo

Heroes of New Zealand

Omahu Church of Hoani (John), which was consecrated on 28 January 1879 by Rt. Rev. E.C. Stuart - Bishop of Waiapu.

For further interesting information read "West to the Annie" published by the RD9 Historical Committee. Ref: ISBN 0-473-08951-3

Proceed along the Taihape Road to -

I. MEMORIAL TO A HORSE

(2.3km) (132.2km) on the corner of Ohiti Road that leads to the site of Ohiti Pa. On the first corner is an old willow tree with a totara tablet inscribed, "THE FINISH - IN MEMORY OF OLD - PATRIARCH One of the handsomest gamest and most docile of equine celebrities who died on Sunday the 27 Sept. 1894 aged 25 years this tablet is erected by Campbell, the old man of Ngapuke"

The road winds around the low hills that hide Lake Runanga, a large stretch of water within private land, and passes Runanga Pa. (5.5km) (129km) The historic "Okawa" station lies on the right (7.3km) (127.2km) Its original owner, Thomas Lowry came to New Zealand in 1846 and in 1849 started farming at Lake Rotoaira. Two years later, with Maori guides, he crossed from Tokaanu, by way of Kuripapango, into Hawke's Bay to take up a lease on "Okawa," of about 6070 ha in 1852. It must have been a strange sight, in those early days, for as far as you could see, the rolling country was covered in brownish bracken, one of the hard ferns. The name "Okawa" means bitter water after the ferrous springs found on the property.

Continue on Taihape Road to -

2. FLAG RANGE ROAD

(19.7km) (114.8km) About 1km along this road to the right the traveller is rewarded by extensive views of the mountains to the west with Hawke Bay to the east.

Return to the Taihape Road and turn right and on to - Note: If you take this side spur, add the return kms to further distances.

3. SHERENDEN HALL

(20.7km) (113.8km) This is described by the locals as a "district treasure". It cost £1972 to build in 1920. Outside, the hall is framed by oak trees planted by celebrities including three Governors General. The hall sits on part of the original Tunanui Block which when settled in 1861 was a vast spread of 12,800 hectares of fern, manuka and native grassland to which the only access was up the Tutaekuri River.



Sherenden Hall

Ivan Hughes

The trail continues through the villages of Sherenden and Otamauri. The historic Wahi Pai homestead is on Lee Road and Waikonini outstation is on the right (32.8km) (101.7km).

History comes into its own at River Road (34.6km) (99.9km). This part of the historic coach road to the Inland Patea did not follow the old Maori trail but ran up the Tutaekuri River valley until gorges forced the road up onto a leading ridge across the Kohurau Hills to reach Kuripapango.

Continue to -

4. GLENROSS ROAD

(34.6km) (99.9km). An 8km drive to the left, leads down into the Omahaki Valley, passing the lovely old Mangawhare homestead, built in 1879, and on to a lookout offering good views of the Longfellow and Burns Ranges.

Return to the Taihape Road, allowing for distance and turn left along the straight to -

5. VIEW OF MANGAWHARE HOMESTEAD

(35.0km) (99.5km) Mrs Ruth W Clarkson remembers watching through field glasses, the rivals, Rymer's Pioneer Coaches and Macdonald's Patea Coaches racing up this straight, opposite the homestead, to pick up passengers. Madly swaying coaches and sweating horses provided exciting viewing.

Continue along the Taihape Road to -

6. WILLOWFORD

(36.7km) (97.8km) This is the site of the old Willowford Accommodation House, close to Willowford Road by a small waterfall on the banks of what was once known as Barricade Stream. Here were a water wheel powered pump and a forge for servicing horse drawn transport, while the house provided comfort and protection from the elements for the many varied travellers. Later George Lord ran a coaching business and drove the last horse drawn coach across the Inland Patea Road in 1918.



Water Wheel

Patrick Ward

Continue on to -

7. HAWKE'S BAY PANORAMA

(41km) (93.5km) Passing The Kaweka Forest Headquarters at Waiwhare, the road climbs over a hump and drops past the site where a spare team of horses was held to assist the coach on the next climb up a clay road. Today the road is kept in good condition and passes exotic forest as it climbs high above the Heretaunga Plains. Close to the highest point there is a very good lookout that makes a resting-place while offering a panorama of Hawke's Bay, with Cape Kidnappers showing as a white line.

The trail now enters Southern Kaweka Conservation Park covering an area of some 67,000 hectares and administered by the Department of Conservation.

The dominant park feature is the Kaweka Range which rises to a height of 1724m and comprises of mainly greywacke rock laid down deep under the sea about 180 million years ago. About 30 million years ago the range started to rise and has continued to do so, right up to the present. In places the rock is shattered by the giant transcontinental faults that tear the country apart, as the east and west parts of New Zealand slide by one another. These same movements have contorted the rock into fantastic shapes in places like Gentle Annie, further along the trail.

Most of the soil has been derived from volcanic ash and pumice showers. The Tongariro ash shower that fell between 10,000 to 14,000 years ago now forms a compact reddish brown silt loam of low fertility. Over this the Taupo ash of 120 A.D. burnt the existing plant and tree cover over large areas. Traces of charred timber may be found up to a metre below the present surface. With the advent of man this burning of the vegetation carried on. The Maori fired lowland forest and scrub mainly for the planting of rarauhe, bracken rhizomes or roots, that were dug with a pointed stick and dried on an elevated stage before being hung in bundles from the roof of a storehouse. Often these clearing fires would burn out of control for many days, destroying large areas of forest. The park was also a well-known hunting area and although some fires could have been lightning induced, it is known that the Maori also lit fires to flush out game. In 1796, Captain Cook reported seeing fires burning in this area.

In 1849 the Government purchased some 20,200 hectares of the central part of the Kaweka Range from the Maori and a further 6,800 hectares of the Mangatainoka Block in 1875. Most of this land was leased to two large sheep stations that burnt the native cover to sow imported grasses and run merino sheep over most of the range. When this farming failed, it was realised that we had to protect our watersheds to prevent flooding on the plains. The New Zealand Forest Service took over and today with greater protection of mountain forest and alpine meadows by the Department of Conservation, the scars are healing.

8. THE LIZARD

(43km) (91.5km) Continuing a little further along the Taihape Road, past a deer farm and a forestry track on the left, a sign points to where a strangely shaped rock form known as the Lizard can be seen.

Turn right into Lawrence Road. (44.3km) (90.2km)

9. BLOWHARD BUSH

(44.8km) (89.7km) is a delightful collection of walks with something for every member of the family, ranging from exposed windy ridges with fine views, to sedate paths through massive blocks of limestone, festooned with vines and plants scrambling one over another to reach the light. This is owned by the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society and managed by the Hastings-Havelock North Branch.



Blowhard Bush

Ivan Hughes

The amazing rock formations are of Waitotaran limestone, fractured into blocks by the surrounding active fault lines and worn into strange shapes by the wind and rain. Layers of pumice ash from the central North Island eruptions also cover the area. Some of these eruptions were very hot and destroyed the original vegetation with the exception of a few cabbage trees. This has produced a relatively young stand of forest with mature trees in places. (*Refer to Kaweka Conservation Park Booklet for details of walking tracks in this area.*)

10. THE LAWRENCE

From Blowhard Bush Reserve, Lawrence Road continues on down to Robson Road (+5km) where a magnificent view of the meeting of the Tutaekuri and Donald Rivers can be seen deep in the valley below. The road ends

in a signed car park with a track leading down to the Tutaekuri River.

The walks in this area are for the experienced trumper during the winter months when rivers can rise very quickly. However during summer, the walks are a delightful pastime for the family.

Downstream from the Lawrence is the colourful Taramea Gorge that can be reached when the river is low by walking and wading downstream to where it dives under and over gigantic red and white boulders in the confines of a narrow gorge.

Return to the Taihape Road, taking care to allow for distances on this spur -

After leaving Blowhard Bush Reserve, the view to the south centres around a rugged cliff lined mountain, Mount Miroroa, with a deep valley in the foreground. In this valley between the road and Omahaki Stream lies the trackless Fern Bird Bush Scenic Reserve that was set aside for the protection of this elusive bird.

Carry on to -

I I. KURIPAPANGO ROAD

(52.5km) (82.0km) The Trail crosses the Waikarokaro Stream to Kuripapango Road leading to The Lakes and Mackintosh road-ends where information boards direct walkers to the many interesting tracks e.g. The Lakes. These two small lakes, formed many thousands of years ago by a massive slip, are reputed to contain trout from Loch Leven in Scotland, released in the 1860s. The plant life is also unusual, supporting a few rare orchids.



The Lakes

Graeme Dalzell

12. KURIPAPANGO

(56.4km) (78.1km) The Taihape Road drops down into the Kuripapango depression by a picnic area overlooking the river and crosses river flats to all that is left of Kuripapango. This was named after a Wanganui Maori warrior who was killed and eaten while trying to invade Hawke's Bay in the 1600s.

William Colenso gave us a word picture of the area, "...neither picturesque nor pleasing, being rather of a frightful kind, which is greatly augmented through the tawhai (nothofagus) forests which formerly covered several of the nooks and crests of the mountainous hills and cliffs, having been withered and destroyed. And the solitude... is intense and almost unbearable. In fact the whole of the country over which we had hitherto passed is of the utmost desolate description."



Rymers Coach, The Gentle Annie background

In early 1882 there were two hotels at Kuripapango, one on each side of the Ngaruroro River. Alexander Macdonald had a two-storey hotel on the western side and J.G. Kinross on the eastern side. Later Mr Macdonald, at the insistence of Renata Kawepo, the Maori land owner, moved his hotel across the river and by 1889 owned both hotels and was advertising, in Europe, Kuripapango as a health resort. There were stables, blacksmith, saddler's shop, bootmaker and general store in connection with the combined Kuripapango Hotel.

It was here that the first dog trials in the North Island were held on "Dog Trial Hill" just above Kuripapango in 1888 and were such a great success, they set the standards for the next ninety years. Kuripapango however, was doomed to failure. The Good Friday flood of 1897 washed away sections of the road, many

small bridges and worst of all, the main bridge at Kuripapango. The end of the tourist trade came in 1901 when the Kuripapango Hotel burnt down and the guests driven back to Napier in their night attire. George Rymer sold his coaches to the Hawke's Bay Motor Company in 1903 and in 1908 the Main Trunk Railway diverted most of the traffic north and south to other centres. The last coach crossed Gentle Annie in 1918 when George Lord closed the Willowford Accommodation House and the New Zealand Forest Service purchased the last of the land in 1982.

Before the bridge, a side road leads to Robson Lodge, the farmhouse of the Lumsden family in the 1940s and later the home of ranger, Morrie Robson. Today this Department of Conservation lodge is available to groups interested in outdoor activities and offers walking access to the moonscape summit of Mount Kohinga by way of Charlie Brown Road.

The Taihape Road now crosses the Ngaruroro River just downstream from the old ford. The original bridge, designed by County Engineer, E H Bold, was built for £1626 (\$3252) by Angus McKay and was opened in August 1881. Within a year the bridge had to be raised, lengthened and repaired. The Good Friday flood of 1897 washed the bridge away and a temporary suspension bridge was built in August 1897 that would only allow a horse or one wool bale on a trolley to cross at a time.

Another bridge built by John Griffin was ready in March 1899 with the suspension bridge left in place until 1903 when it was relocated to become the Rangitikei Bridge.

The Griffin bridge lasted for 60 years but with a



1899-1961 Bridges

Phillip Beck (Opus)

maximum load of 6.5 tons the Hawke's Bay County Council had to build loading platforms on either side of the river so trucks could be unloaded, the stock driven across to be reloaded on the far side.

In January 1961 a Callender-Hamilton bridge was built in a cutting on the Taihape side of the river and pulled into place in a single day while about two hundred people stood on the old bridge to watch. Rosie Macdonald, daughter of Alexander, opened the bridge officially the following month.

This is the bridge that we cross today, to pass a picnic area and climb "Gentle Annie" 736m above sea level, with its fine views, if you can afford to take your eyes off the road.

*Research and Text by late Roy J.
Peacock; Revised by Don Trask*



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