



Heritage Trail



Gore Heritage Trail



the Real
Discover  New Zealand



Welcome to the Gore Heritage Trail

This Heritage Trail is designed for visitors wishing to undertake a walking tour of historic sites within the town of Gore.

Established as a rural service community, Gore's urban landscape reflects the changing fortunes common to many small New Zealand centres and also the unique social dynamics and aspirations specific to this particular place. It is important to realise that the very geography of the Maitava Valley where Gore is sited has dictated the nature of the town's infrastructure development, and aspects of this will become apparent as the trail progresses.

Known to southern Maori as Maruawai (Valley of Water), this area's pre-European landscape featured primarily tussock and swamp and hosted only seasonal mana whenua encampments at the confluence of the Maitava River and Waikaka Stream. Earliest European settlement stemmed from the convenience afforded by an easy river crossing that assisted travel between the Otago and Southland regions. The 'Long Ford' as it became known, hosted first an accommodation house in 1862 followed by a bridge and railway. This paved the way for the subsequent habitation of the area and construction of two initial settlements - Gordon on the east of the river, Longford on the west - merging as Gore Borough in 1885.

To fully appreciate all 18 trail sites be sure to allow yourself at least 3 hours.

1. Hokonui Heritage Centre - Corner Hokonui Drive & Norfolk Street

This complex houses the Hokonui Moonshine Museum, Gore Historical Museum, the Hokonui Heritage Research Centre and the Gore Visitor Information Centre. Southland's illicit whisky making tradition is explored within the Hokonui Moonshine Museum and visitors are given the opportunity to discover the social history surrounding 51 years of Prohibition in the South.

The Gore Historical Museum provides a wealth of local historical information through displays and extensive collections, while a cooperative venture between the Gore District Historical Society and the Gore Group of Genealogists has established a one-stop information service for people researching family and local histories.

2. Eastern Southland Gallery (previously the Coronation Library), - Corner Norfolk Street & Hokonui Drive

The original Gore Athenaeum and Public Library was established in 1881 and in 1901 was renamed in commemoration of the coronation of King Edward VII.

In 1907 the Gore Borough Council was successful in attracting a grant of £2,000 for a new library from famous Scottish philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, the contract for this handsome brick building, designed by Invercargill architect E.R. Wilson, was let in September 1909, with the Governor General Lord Plunkett laying the foundation stone in April of



The building eventually proved to be too small to serve the growing needs of a prospering town of avid readers and the new neighbouring library opened in September 1983. The building was converted to its present use as the Eastern Southland Gallery which offers a varied programme of exhibitions, performances and community arts activities.

3. Clock Tower - Norfolk Street

Despite its 20th Century appearance the Clock Tower has strong links to the town's early history. The structure stands on land where the Waimea Railway Line ran from Gore to Kingston from 1880 to 1971. The clock mechanism and bells were originally housed in a tower on Gore's second Post Office and were first commissioned in 1906.

J B Joyce & Co of Whitchurch, England manufactured the 'Westminster Chimes' clock and world-renowned, John Taylor & Co, Loughborough, England, manufactured the bells.

For safety reasons the Post Office clock tower was dismantled in 1945 and the clock and bells were stored until the new tower was erected nearly 50 years later. New Zealand's first female Governor General, Dame Catherine Tizard opened the Clock Tower in 1991.

4. First Gore High School - Norfolk Street

Originally to be built on government land on the Triangle, it was decided that the site was too small for the proposed school, consequently the Triangle was exchanged for the Gore Borough Council reserve land near the Mataura River. Building of the combined High School and Technical School started in 1910 and was opened in 1911. One of the opening's distinguished guests was Sir Apirana Ngata who gave the school the name of Kura Awa - 'the school by the river'.

The folly of siting the school near the river was quickly realised when the school was flooded and half of the playing field area was washed away in 1913.



back again (quickly!) for lunch and then to repeat the process at the end of the day. This arrangement lasted until the new High School, built next to the Hostel, was opened in 1954.

The original Gore High School buildings are now used as a Community Centre and Theatre.

CATEGORY II



5. East Gore Presbyterian Church - Rock Street

At the time the hilltop site chosen for the new Presbyterian Church in East Gore (or Gordon as it was then known) was said to be "the finest this City of the Valley can boast"..."one of the finest sites in Otago". In 1880, prominent architect Mr R. A. Lawson of Dunedin was invited to draw up plans for a church to seat 200. The belfry was to be "fairly substantial... useful as well as ornamental". Totara was used for the piles and red pine for some of the work but as costs were a major consideration white pine was used in much of the construction - this decision has since haunted church committees who have struggled to control borer infestation of the soft wood.

Opened in 1881, it was only a few years later in 1892 that the church was extended to cater for the burgeoning congregation. A hall and Sunday School rooms were added in 1962 at which time major renovation work was carried out on the interior of the church building. The 51ft church spire and steep roof were given a coat of paint for the first time since the initial coat in 1881! The historical value of the church was recognised in 1997 with the awarding of Category II classification on the New Zealand Historic Places Trust register.



To cater for the large number of rural students who daily travelled long distances by train or horse, the High School Hostel on Courtts Road was opened in 1923. Boarders were expected to regimentally march across town to school in the mornings, march to the hostel and

6. Victoria Park - Corner Medway Street & River Road

The Sequoia, Oak and Wellingtonia Tress in this area were planted in 1897 to mark the 60th anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign

Gore was originally known as Long Ford due to the crossing afforded at this shallow section of the Mataura River.

Between 300 to 600 metres long and about 0.75 to 1.5 metres deep the ford is south of the bridge and runs diagonally across to and near the present day abattoir.

The plaque marks the site of Mortons Accommodation House - the first building at the Long Ford in 1862. The Ford's use declined after the river was bridged in 1875 when the railway line to Gore was completed.

CATEGORY I



7. Flemings Creamoata Mill - Mersey Street

Established in 1878 to mill a large crop of wheat grown by the NZ Agricultural Company the Mill later specialised in processing locally grown oats. Its famous Creamoata brand was developed in the early 1900's and mascot Sergeant Dan the Creamoata Man made his appearance in the 1920's. Although now owned by a large food conglomerate, the name Flemings is still retained from the time when the Mill was owned and managed by the local Fleming family. The Mill has suffered numerous fires and rebuilding in its long history. The earliest structure still remaining is the 1892 four storied building fronting Gorton Street. The 92ft chimney dates from 1912 and was constructed by John Day of Gore using 34,000 bricks.



8. Replica Streetlight - Main Street

On the 22nd July 1894 Gore became the third town in New Zealand to have its streets lit by electricity. "Amid great rejoicing... people promenaded the town in the brilliant light of the illuminating media provided by two streetlights"

A replica of one of these streetlights, very close to the original site, was installed to mark the centenary of this event in July 1994.

9. Post Office - Main Street

This was Gore's grandiose second Post Office and opened in 1904. It originally had a four-sided tower housing the town clock but this was removed in 1945 as an earthquake risk. The town clock mechanisms lay dormant until 1990 when they were re-housed in the Clock Tower near the Library.



10. Church of the Blessed Sacrament - Ardwick Street

Gore's Catholic Church was established in 1882 and the building of the first Church of the Blessed Sacrament, a wooden structure in Halton St in Gordon (East Gore) was completed the following year.

The building of the second church on the present site had just begun when the 1913 flood washed away what had been started.

Declared structurally unsound in the 1970's the church was demolished to make way for the present church which was designed by Dunedin architect, Robert Turvey. Opened in 1988 one of the features is the incorporation of three historical bells in the belltower - one is from the demolished church, another from the old Balfour Church and the largest of the three was a gift from the Redemptorist Monastery in Wellington.



11. Gore War Memorial - Fairfield Street

Surrounded by the Kings Oak, Queens Oak, Prince of Wales Oak and the Dominion Oak (planted to mark the Coronation of King George V in 1911) the Gore War Memorial was erected by the citizens of Gore in memory of the local men who fell in World War I.

The memorial was designed and built by Mr A D Anderson of Invercargill and was unveiled on ANZAC Day, the 25th April 1924.

Standing 49 feet tall and resting on a 25 square foot redstone and concrete base, the Kakanui limestone monument is graced by a marble Statue of Peace. Modifications to the memorial were made after World War II to incorporate the names of the 45 local men who lost their lives at that time.



12. Gore Methodist Church - Corner Irk & Fairfield Street

By 1903 it was decided that the original 150 seat Gore Methodist Church built in 1884 (and paid for by 'pew rents') was too small for the growing town and congregation. The present site was purchased in 1903 and Invercargill architect, ER Wilson, was engaged to design a church 'which would be a credit to the town'. Plans were produced for an impressive 500-seat building enhanced by a 100ft spire at the cost of £1,900. With a shortage of funds work began on the main body of the church with the intention that the spire, new entry and second vestry be added as funds came to hand. The church opening was celebrated in June 1910, but just three years later the church was damaged when it was inundated by floodwaters in the major flood of 1913.

The last Methodist service was on the 23rd December 1990. The building presently serves as a place of worship for the Gore Bible Chapel.

13. Gore Public Gardens - Fairfield Street

The gardens are situated in the town's 'Green Belt', which was designated in an 1874 survey of the town. Originally the 'Green Belt' was a demarcation between town and country.

The site of the gardens was at one time used as grazing until development began in the early 1900's. Gore's first public gardener was Mr A T Newman who later served as Mayor of the town for over 20 years. Community groups and individuals have contributed to the development of the gardens over the years.



14. Gore Main School - Ardwick Street

The present school was built on the site of the first Gore school, which opened in 1878 among the tussocks. A small wooden structure, it burnt down in 1896 and a larger wooden building was erected in its place. Another fire in 1920 resulted in a new brick school that opened in 1922. This building served the community for 62 years until it was demolished to make way for the present school that opened in 1984.



15. Bannerman Park - Martin Street

Bannerman Park was established on the site of the original Gore Cemetery, which was used for burials from 1874 to 1878 after which it was relocated to the larger Crewe Street site.

The Gore Public Swimming baths were subsequently built on the site in the 1920's but after problems with cracking they too were abandoned.

The site reverted to grazing land until the 1960's when Gore Solicitor, R B Bannerman, initiated negotiations with landowners and the Council to establish and develop a reserve of 18 acres.

Originally known as the Hidden Valley Reserve it was renamed Bannerman Park in 1977 in recognition of Mr Bannerman's work to establish the town's 'little gem'.

16. Gore Cemetery - Crewe Street

Established in 1878 the eight-acre reserve was the second cemetery in Gore. An earlier cemetery - Bannerman Park - was the site of the first burial in Gore, taking place in 1873 after James Edgar was found dead at Brennan's Hotel.

Chinese gold miners were among 13 others who were also interred at the first cemetery before a decision to relocate to the larger Crewe Street site resulted in their exhumation and reburial.

The earliest headstone in the cemetery is in Block 32, dated 14th June 1880, marking the grave of Priscilla Whitham.

A stroll through the cemetery will reveal prominent names from the annals of the district's history including Brennan, Canning, Green, Dolamore, Latham, Poppelwell and many others.

17. Hokonui Pioneer Park - Walmea Street



This heritage park features a variety of static machinery displays and relocated historic buildings. This trail identifies four key structures:

Cottage. The two front rooms were built in 1883 with the rest being added in 1896. Furnished with objects from the Gore Historical Society collection it offers a glimpse of family life around the turn of the 20th century.

Bank of New Zealand.

This was built around 1910 and originally served the town of Balfour.

Used only once a week when the agent called, the bank is a simple structure. The very small rear room was where the agent used to sleep overnight

School. This originally was sited beside the Mataura - Clinton road at Ferndale. Magdalena Orchison, the first teacher, christened the unnamed district after her father's home in Scotland.

Opened in 1884, the school also served as the Post Office as well as being the venue for all the community events.

Church. The Church of Epiphany originally served the Mandeville Anglican community from 1894 to 1980.

18. Holy Trinity Anglican Church - Corner Hokonui Drive & Traford Street

Holy Trinity stands on the site previously occupied by an earlier wooden church building. The wooden church was the first in Gore, built in 1881 and had previously been moved to this site by traction engine.



Although the building permit for the present church was issued in 1950 the dedication ceremony didn't take place until 1957 and it wasn't until 1959 that the church was consecrated. Incorporated into the east wall of the entry porch is a large stone inscribed 1710-1940. This was rescued from St Paul's Cathedral after the World War II bombing and presented to Holy Trinity by the Dean of St Pauls in 1945. Also in the entry porch is a large oak table that was made from one of the trees removed from the site to make way for the new church.



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