

The original footprint of Pukekura Park as detailed in the “Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876.”

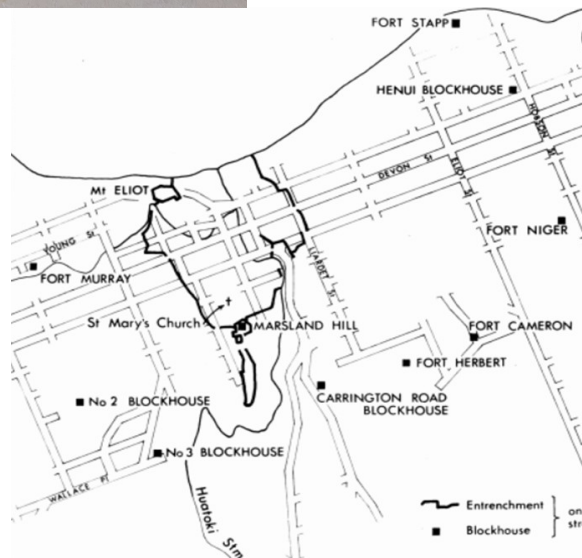
A few individual sections were purchased soon after the official opening of the park and more acquired during the following decades. By 1933 the park was approximately 56 acres.



Pukekura Park Buggy Tour

A map of New Plymouth in the winter of 1860 showing the fortifications around the town.

Two of the fortifications were within the boundary of the current park. They were Carrington Road Blockhouse and Fort Herbert.



These rides are operated by volunteers of the “Friends of the Pukekura Park” with the support of the New Plymouth District Council.

Visit the “Friends of Pukekura Park” website: <http://www.pukekura.org.nz/>

For Buggy information/ bookings - call :- 0212133242

This booklet was produced by The Friends of Pukekura Park
 Many thanks to Ian Hutchinson, Pukekura Park’s Botanical Records Officer for his input and supply of some pictorial content.

The Start of the Journey

It all began early in 1875 when Robert Clinton Hughes, a young lawyer and new member of the Taranaki Provincial Council, asked if the government had any land that could be released for recreational purposes. The only land available was an area set aside as a botanical garden next to the Te Henui stream. Later that year Thomas Kelly the Provincial Secretary was looking for some land to build a lunatic asylum. He identified Mount Herbert which lies behind the eastern terraces of the sports ground. While surveying this spot he noticed a wasteland to the south with a stream running through it. He could see that an ornamental lake could easily be formed and access paths made from Eliot Street, Victoria Road and Wakefield Street. At the time the land was earmarked for educational purposes but government agreed for it to be used as a recreation ground.

The recreation ground was formed through an Act of Parliament "Taranaki Botanic Garden Act 1876" and passed into law during September 1876. This act identified almost 49 acres of land with a Board of Trustees to run it. The park is now 128 acres.

The Board of Trustees comprised Thomas King (chairman), J. T. Davis, R. C. Hughes, T. Colson, J. Gilmour, H. Ford and R. J. Collins (secretary).

The asylum was never built. The Provincial Council found it was cheaper to send patients to a facility in Wellington at a cost of £1 per week per patient.

1. Cannon Hill

The opening ceremony 29th May 1876 was centered around Cannon Hill. Four ceremonial trees were planted by Jane Carrington, the daughter of F.A Carrington (New Plymouth Superintendent), an oak, a puriri, a Norfolk Island Pine and a *Pinus radiata*. Following these plantings spectators were invited to plant other trees.



The hill originally extended further south but was cut back to make room for the Band Rotunda. In 1893 paths were cut into its face and Dicky Barrett's cannon was hauled up. In 1894 whale bones adorned Cannon Hill, remnants of which can still be seen.



24. Tea House.

The first Tea House built in 1905 was demolished in 1931 to make way for the current Tea House which was donated by Mr. & Mrs. C.H. Burgess to celebrate their Golden Wedding anniversary. Mr. Burgess was an ex mayor of New Plymouth and Mrs. Burgess was on the Board of Trustees for a number of years starting in 1918. The photo depicts Mrs. Burgess giving a speech on the opening day.



25. Fernery and Display Houses

The original Fernery with its tunnel entrance was constructed between 1926-28 to the design of Hawera horticulturalist Mrs. Elizabeth (Lily) Lovell OBE, MBE. The Kibby Begonia House donated by George and Mabel Kibby was opened in 1969 replacing an old grape-house which had been transferred from Brooklands.

There have been several major upgrades to this area.



26. Fred Parker Lawn

This area was a swamp until 1928. When Thomas Horton was overseeing the construction of the fernery he made use of the large amounts of earth removed to landscape the lawn and the area known as Stainton Dell. The Kauri in the lawn was planted in 1929 when the park was handed over to the Borough Council.



27. Wisteria

The original Wisteria pergola was designed and construction supervised by S. Percy Smith in 1908. The original structure was made from Mamaku Tree fern trunks. The pergola was recently replaced by a modern structure.

Brooklands and Maranui Gully

Brooklands was purchased in 1888 by Newton King, no relation of Henry King. In 1933 the property was gifted to the town by the King family after the death of Mr. Newton King and his wife.

About that time land belonging to C.A. Wilkinson and T.C. List were also gifted to the city (These properties form Maranui Gully). Within this area of the park there are approximately 30 acres of ancient native forest.



20. 2000 year old Puriri Tree

The 2000 year old Puriri, said to be the largest of its species, which survived the felling of surrounding bush and perhaps was a meeting place for Maori people. Scar tissue from fire is visible near the base. The tree is protected.



21. The Gables— Colonial Hospital

The Gables was originally a hospital built in 1848 on the site of the Girls' High School on Mangorei Road. In 1904 it was due to be demolished and was auctioned by Newton King who bought it for £10. He had the house stripped down, refurbished and rebuilt where it stands today. The gardens are largely maintained by a volunteer group of the Friends of Pukekura Park.



23. Boatshed & Boatshed Bridge

These were both built in 1894 at a cost of over £100. Row boats can be hired during the summer from the Tea House.



2. Main Lake

Originally a stream ran through the park from south to north roughly along the western bank of the main lake. To form the lake in 1878 a dam was built using puddled clay and earth backfill, all dug out by hand. Soon after completion a bathing shed and diving board were built and a swimming club was formed. The use of the lake was restricted to certain hours. Men and women were not allowed to bathe together. When ladies were bathing a red flag was hoisted on the Cannon Hill flagpole to tell the gentlemen to stay clear.



3. Band Rotunda and Drinking Water Fountain

The base of the Rotunda was built in 1887 but due to a lack of funds the top didn't get erected until 1891. The first time it was used was in 1887 for Queen Victoria's 50th Jubilee celebrations. After completion in 1891 it was first used for New Plymouth's 50th Jubilee celebrations. The nearby drinking water fountain was built in 1897 to commemorate Queen Victoria's 60th Jubilee.



4. Hatchery Lawn

The lawn gets its name from ponds which were used for raising trout in the early 1900's. This was done in conjunction with the Acclimatization Society. The park curator Charles Edgecombe was charged with feeding the fish daily with mashed liver etc.

During WWI the ponds fell into disuse because many men had gone off to war, but were reinstated in the early 1920's and a hatchery was built at the south end of the lawn. This was used until the end of the 1920's. In 1955 the ponds were filled in using material taken from an island in the Fountain Lake. The lawn has a popular Festival of the Lights stage where viewers picnic on the lawn in the evenings.



5. Fountain Lake

This lake formed in 1893 originally had an island in the middle, which was removed to make way for the erection of a fountain to commemorate the visit of Queen Elizabeth II in 1954.

6. Sports Ground

The Sports Ground was originally a swamp. In 1883 earth was cut from Liardet Street outside the park gates and the spoil was used for fill. The first football practice was in 1885. Over the following decades the grounds underwent several improvements to increase seating capacity and improve drainage. Scenes from the movie "The Last Samurai" were filmed here. The cricket ground is listed in "Wisden Cricketers' Almanac" making it world famous. Over the years this ground has hosted many other events such as ANZAC Day, Royal visits and band competitions etc.



New Plymouth Recreation
Rosedale, Otago
Historical Society

7. The Waterwheel

This was installed in 1976 to commemorate 100 years of the park. The wheel was built around the frame of an old waterwheel from the Omata dairy factory. Due to maintenance issues it was replaced in 2005.



8. Smith Walk

Named after William Walter Smith who was the curator of the park 1908-1920. Mr. Smith was a talented botanist, entomologist and ornithologist. He was the first person in NZ to breed Kiwi in captivity. He studied their habits, and on one occasion he took a kiwi out on a boat and released it in the main lake to see if it could swim. Luckily for Mr. Smith, it could and he left the bird in the water for an hour.



9. Palm Lawn area

In 1912 a rose garden was planted on this site. The first palms were planted in 1917 which included cliff date palms and cabbage palms. The Nikau palm (*Rhopalostylis sapida*) which is plentiful in Pukekura Park, is the only palm native to New Zealand.



17. Bowl of Broolands

The lake was dug by the Newton King family to allow for swimming and boating. The surrounding grass was formerly a cow paddock.

The original bowl stage was opened in 1958 but has since been modified. Many famous acts have performed on this stage including Elton John and Cliff Richard.



18. The Zoo

Part of the Brooklands Estate was developed into this zoo, which New Plymouth Jaycees organized. It was completed in 1965. Many thousands of visitors visit today.

The zoo houses Meerkats, small monkeys, farm animals, small reptiles, a walk through aviary etc. There is also a children's playground.

19. Brooklands Fireplace

The original Brooklands property was owned by Captain Henry King who came to New Plymouth on the Amelia Thompson in 1841. He was the Plymouth Company's



representative and first commissioner of New Plymouth. His homestead was burned down in 1861 during the First Taranaki war. The fireplace (incorporating a small bread oven) is all that remains of the property.



14. Kauri

There are several hundred Kauri in the park, the majority of which were planted by Thomas Horton between 1924 and 1940.

The first Kauri planted was in 1911 and is on the path from the boatshed bridge leading to the Rhododendron Dell. Its roots are protected by a wooden walkway.



15. The Serpentine

The Serpentine is the body of water leading from Brooklands to the main lake. It was created in 1908 by Mr. S. Percy Smith, a New Plymouth surveyor who rose to become Surveyor General of New Zealand. He was also a founding member of the Polynesian Society and was the chairman of the Scenery Preservation Commission set up in 1904 by the government.



16. Rhododendron Dell and Maze

The Rhododendron Dell was planted in the late 1930's by Thomas Horton with money bequeathed by Charles Score Sanders. Mr. Horton sourced some plants from as far away as England.

In the early 1890's a circular maze was planted in this vicinity by Archibald Hood using 3-4000 Boxthorn plants which he donated. Unfortunately these plants were unsuitable and due to maintenance costs the maze was removed about 3 years later. Mr. Hood was an author and poet. To try and raise money for the upkeep of the maze he wrote "Johnny Fro", the tale of a boy who meets a girl on The Poet's bridge and marries her in the maze.



10. Japanese Hillside

This hillside was designed and planted to reflect a typical Japanese hillside forest. In 2001 the Mishima Gate, a traditional red Japanese torii gate, was opened by Mishima City Council Chairman Mr. Hajime Shimura and Deputy Mayor Peter Tennent to mark the 10th anniversary of the sister city relationship between New Plymouth and Mishima. The plants are native to Japan.



11. Moreton Bay Fig

Planted in 1895 it is reputed to be the tallest Fig tree in New Zealand. It is registered as a Notable Tree.



12. Waterfall

Built in 1970 by George Fuller, Allan Jellyman and Ian McDowell. They used 3 power poles, 100 tons of boulders and made four cascades, incorporating lighting. The structure is 10.7m high and circulates approx 182,000 litres of water per hour.



13. "The Poet's Bridge"

Built in 1884 at the cost of £155. The money was donated by Mr. James T. Davis who was on the Board of Trustees. He won this money by betting on a horse called "The Poet".

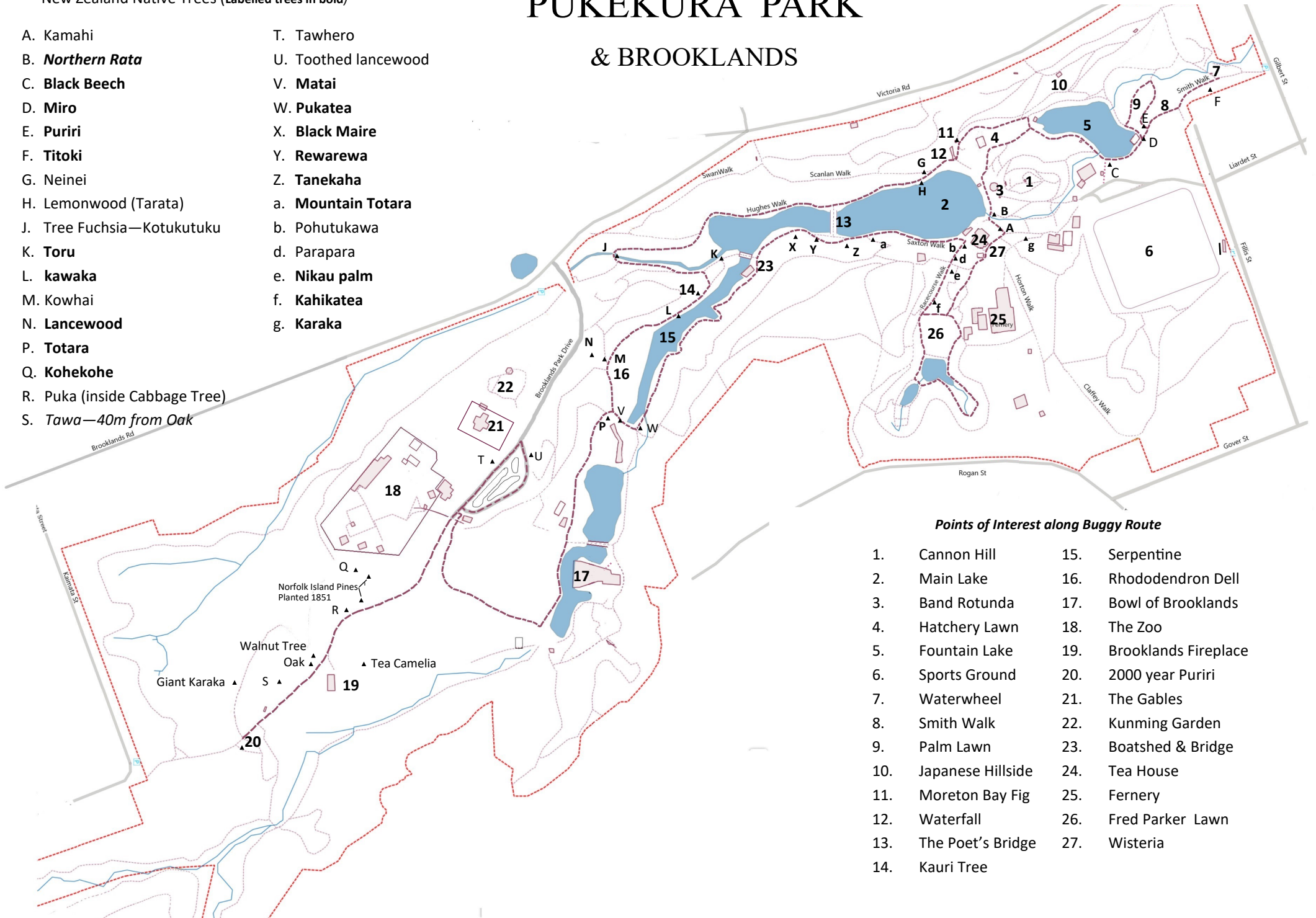
Davis drowned in the lake in 1891 when he was on his way home from visiting his sister. The next morning the foreman of a prison crew working in the park noticed a pile of clothes near the bathing shed, and a search revealed Davis's body. The original bridge was replaced in 1938 with money bequeathed by Charles Score Sanders.



New Zealand Native Trees (Labelled trees in bold)

PUKEKURA PARK & BROOKLANDS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| A. Kamahi | T. Tawhero |
| B. Northern Rata | U. Toothed lancewood |
| C. Black Beech | V. Matai |
| D. Miro | W. Pukatea |
| E. Puriri | X. Black Maire |
| F. Titoki | Y. Rewarewa |
| G. Neinei | Z. Tanekaha |
| H. Lemonwood (Tarata) | a. Mountain Totara |
| J. Tree Fuchsia—Kotukutuku | b. Pohutukawa |
| K. Toru | d. Parapara |
| L. kawaka | e. Nikau palm |
| M. Kowhai | f. Kahikatea |
| N. Lancewood | g. Karaka |
| P. Totara | |
| Q. Kohekohe | |
| R. Puka (inside Cabbage Tree) | |
| S. <i>Tawa—40m from Oak</i> | |



Points of Interest along Buggy Route

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|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Cannon Hill | 15. Serpentine |
| 2. Main Lake | 16. Rhododendron Dell |
| 3. Band Rotunda | 17. Bowl of Brooklands |
| 4. Hatchery Lawn | 18. The Zoo |
| 5. Fountain Lake | 19. Brooklands Fireplace |
| 6. Sports Ground | 20. 2000 year Puriri |
| 7. Waterwheel | 21. The Gables |
| 8. Smith Walk | 22. Kunming Garden |
| 9. Palm Lawn | 23. Boatshed & Bridge |
| 10. Japanese Hillside | 24. Tea House |
| 11. Moreton Bay Fig | 25. Fernery |
| 12. Waterfall | 26. Fred Parker Lawn |
| 13. The Poet's Bridge | 27. Wisteria |
| 14. Kauri Tree | |