



New Zealand's

OTAGO



GOLDFIELDS

HERITAGE TRAIL



LOCALITY
MAP



OTAGO GOLDFIELDS HERITAGE TRAIL

HIGHWAYS THROUGH HISTORY

Take a journey back through time and follow the trail the miners took in their quest for gold. Forty years of goldmining transformed Otago, with most present-day towns owing their origins to the goldrushes.

The dry climate, local pride and the work of Dept. of Conservation staff, has preserved the miners legacy - mud and stone buildings, intriguing machinery, golden sluiced cliffs, deep mine shafts and underground passages. Look for the sign of the panning miner, which identifies some of these historic sites along the trail. Wild flowers and herbs grow in abundance along these trails.

The main highways are sealed, but some old mining sites are on gravelled side roads. Most of the towns, except the very small townships, offer a choice of accommodation and eating places.

Allow a day to travel from Dunedin to Queenstown, to enable you to visit sites en-route.

Top up with petrol if heading to St Bathans.

DUNEDIN (Edinburgh of the South)

Discovery of gold in Otago in 1861 brought wealth and prosperity to Dunedin, elevating it to the commercial centre of New Zealand. Discover this rich past in the Early Settlers Museum, 220 Cumberland Street.

LAWRENCE

Here Gabriel Read discovered gold. Over 10,000 miners rushed to the Tuapeka goldfield as the museum details. Follow the signs to Gabriels Gully, the Pick and Shovel Monument, and Blue Spur, origin of the gully gold.

ROXBURGH

During the gold rush era, Roxburgh had 20 gold dredges working the Clutha River nearby. When the river is low one of the sunken dredges can be seen from the north end of town. North of Roxburgh, 23kms, is Gorge Creek, where a monument commemorates miners who perished in the 1863 snows on the Old Man Range.

FRUITLANDS

The roadside Fruitlands Gallery offers food and crafts from a lovingly restored stone building. Nearby Symes Road leads 1km to restored stone Mitchells Cottage, which boasts a sundial chipped from solid schist stone.

ALEXANDRA

The museum has a comprehensive mining relic collection. In the town centre sits the 1876 courthouse, of upright and solid character. The Alexandra Visitor Centre has brochures on two Walking & Viewing Tours that include a map and detailed information on historic sites in the area. Appropriate plaques are situated on some of these sites.

CLYDE

Once the centre of the Dunstan Goldfields, Clyde is now overshadowed by a hydro-electricity dam. Detour through this historic town, where stone buildings line the streets. Olivers Restaurant, once a miners general store, is steeped in old world charm. Take a walk back through history to the pioneers memorial, the old courthouse, the museum and the first herb factory in New Zealand.

CROMWELL

Now a modern town, redeveloped because of the Clyde Dam project and Lake Dunstan, which has formed behind it. In the mall the museum displays gold relics, and in an historic precinct parts of old Cromwell Town have been painstakingly re-erected stone by stone.

Across the Bannockburn bridge, 9km south of Cromwell is a tortured yet beautiful landscape sculpted by miners in their sluicing for gold from 1862-1910. Water races, dams, tunnels, shafts and crumbling cobb & stone buildings are fascinating features found on a walk around these Bannockburn diggings. Vineyards are now a strong feature in this area. Some 18km from Cromwell, on the Lindis Pass road, the Bendigo Loop Road takes you to Bendigo Logantown and Welshtown. One of the few successful quartz mining areas in Otago, Bendigo & surrounds were mined for over half a century. Dozens of crumbling stone cottages and huts are dotted amongst the scrub at Logantown and Welshtown. - but so too are deep mine shafts. Follow the track and watch your step on your explorations.

Towards Queenstown, just 10km from Cromwell, is the Kawarau Gorge Mining Centre. There are a range of displays and exhibitions here including a working stamper battery, and you can even pan for your own gold.

QUEENSTOWN

A town popular with travellers. The Kawarau Gorge and rapids barred the way to the miners until a stone-piered suspension bridge was erected in 1860. This superb structure can be seen alongside today's modern highway, just 18km from Queenstown.

At Arthurs Point near Queenstown, is the Oxenbridge Tunnel, which took four years of digging. The Shotover River was then diverted through it - but only 90 ounces of gold was recovered from the dry riverbed.

In the hills behind Queenstown is another goldtown - Skippers, accessible by a spectacular drive in a 4 wheel drive vehicle. Gold was discovered in 1862, and once 1,500 people lived here.

ARROWTOWN

This tourist town was a goldmining town, now faithfully preserved in historic character. The museum shows you the region's rich history. Below the town, on the banks of the Arrow River, is a restored Chinese settlement - mute reminder of a colourful chapter in Central Otago history.

CARDRONA

A few remains of the Cardrona diggings can be found along the picturesque Cardrona Valley Road from Wanaka over the Crown Range to Queenstown. The Big 1878 Flood destroyed the valley leaving little behind. A few of the miners returned, not to work the valley floor but the higher slopes. The old Cardrona Hotel, restored mid 1980's has on display a few memories from the past.

MACETOWN

15km up the Arrow River, is reached by 4 wheel drive or a 5 hour hike. Once a bustling mining town, it is now a ghost town, with only a few buildings remaining, and massive stamping batteries now silent.

OPHIR

A peaceful town today, has a rich history with many original buildings including the restored post and telegraph office of 1886 remaining.

ST BATHANS

A tiny township, where once 2,000 miners lived. A 120m high hill was dug away by the miners until a hole 69m deep was left. This was the deepest hydraulic mining lift in the world, and is now the Blue Lake. The Vulcan Hotel and old Post Office are features of St Bathans.

NASEBY

A favoured holiday town, with the sluiced cliffs softened by the spread of forest trees. Enquire at the forest HQ about walks through the goldworkings. Browse in the Early Settlers Museum, and step back in time into the watchmakers shop.

DANSEYS PASS

With its hotel, is just 15km on. At the nearby picnic area a grove of trees represents each homeland of the 3,000 miners who prospected here.

CAMBRIAN, DRYBREAD AND MATAKANUI

Cambrian is an old Welshman's gold and coal mining settlement (1863) off St Bathans Loop Road on the way to St Bathans. Along Cambrian Road, a number of cottages still survive and are used today as holiday cribs while the rest are just ruins. Cambrian is just one of a number of mining settlements which grew up along the eastern side of the Dunstan Mountains. Matakaniui has some fascinating old buildings, and places with intriguing names like Devonshire Diggings, Tinkers Diggings, Drybread Diggings and Vinegar Hill are worth exploring if you have time. Much can be learned from the gravestones in cemeteries such as the one at Drybread.

OTUREHUA

Near here is the only poppet head still standing in Otago. Above a 46m mine-shaft, it supports wheels over which run ropes to hoist gold-bearing ore to the surface. Golden Progress quartz mine poppet head is a short walk from Reefs Road, a loop road north of Oturehua. South of the town is Hayes Engineering Works, established in 1895, featuring fascinating machinery in the water-powered works. Hayes Engineering Works is open weekends over summer, 10am - 4pm.

MACRAES FLAT

Once a busy goldtown, the township of Macraes is off State Highway 85. The Golden Point battery is 5km from Macraes. The well known Stanleys Hotel, a popular landmark with its motto "While I live I'll crow" is a focal point of the district. A huge open-cast mine now operates in the hills near Macraes.

PALMERSTON

At the junction to State Highway 85 and the route to Central Otago, or State Highway 1 to Dunedin is a model of a working water wheel. If travelling SH85, look at 45km for the Dead Horse pinch where a plaque shows the difficulties of travel in the gold days.

Department of Conservation Offices - Dunedin, Alexandra and Queenstown have further information on the Otago Goldfields Park sites.

**For further information about the Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust & Annual Goldfields Celebrations in November write to:
Otago Goldfields Heritage Trust, PO Box 91, Cromwell, Central Otago, New Zealand - Website: <http://www.nzsouth.co.nz/goldfields> - Email: goldfields@nzsouth.co.nz**