



WELLINGTONplaces

Stuart
Macdonald

WELLINGTONplaces

A PHOTOGRAPHIC JOURNEY

Stuart Macdonald

www.smphotoart.co.nz

previous **publications**

Aotearoa - A Photographer's Journey Around New Zealand
New Holland (2019)

Self Published

nzphotoart - landscape and fine art images from New Zealand (2014)

The Obsessional Photographer (2015)

The Eclectic Photographer (2016)

The Wandering Photographer (2018)

Information about these books can be found at: www.smphotoart.co.nz

Foreword

About this Book

As a long standing Wellingtonian I have often marvelled at, and enjoyed, the range of places we can visit - whether high up at the Makara Gun emplacements, in the bush at Kaitoke or wandering around the city centre and taking in the sights. We do live in a 'cool little capital'.

This book is a collection of photographs captured over the last 10 years or so - with each image (or place) being accompanied by a short 'story'. The story may simply be about how to find this place, or a little bit about its history, or maybe a comment on our culture and life style. Because each image has a 'story' it is also easy to use the book for ideas of places to visit, or to plan short walks to do in the weekend - a sort of 'guide' to cool capital places.

There is no particular order to the images - rather, the book should be seen as a random journey around Wellington and its region, much as if one were exploring bit by bit. As you turn the pages you will be transported from the architecture of the CBD to the beauty and grandeur of Wellington's more remote places. The idea is to present a unique perspective of the place we call 'home', to capture the iconic and the ordinary - the beauty we often see, but overlook. As you turn each page you will not know what you will discover next...

There are many fascinating stories about Wellington reflected in the images captured here - we have a vibrant history that many of us are unaware of these days. Equally, our geography, the harbour, hills, valleys and our variable (and occasionally windy!) climate, give Wellington a beauty all of its own. There are really three parts to greater Wellington - these being Wellington City, Hutt Valley and Porirua - all are covered in this book.

About Wellington

In thinking about this book I did not want to simply re-write a potted history of Wellington. We know what a 'cool' place our city is - and how its geography and weather combine to make one feel alive when out and about. We also think of Wellington as the political center of New Zealand, although I am sure many others elsewhere around the country might take issue with that! Wellington is well known as a creative and cultural center, and has strong links to the movie industry and the creative arts. More Wellingtonians work in the public sector or in professional services (technical, scientific, financial etc) than in other cities. It also has a growing IT industry with niches in gaming and IT security.

So, rather than re-write a short history here are some 'cool capital' facts to dwell on as you turn the pages:

- Maori history tells us that Kupe first visited Wellington as early as the 10th century (the 900s) having originally landed near Hokianga. A later Maori explorer Whatonga is said to have named the harbour Te Whanganui-a-Tara (Wellington's Maori name) after his son Tara. In the early 1800s Whatonga's descendents were forced out of the area by other Maori iwi from further north - for example Ngati Toa and others.
- in 1839 William Wakefield arrived to purchase land for the NZ Company, to on-sell to settlers. In the 1840s the early arrivals settled in the Petone area (originally called Britannia) but it was flood prone and swampy so they shifted the settlement to Thorndon. The settlers from the first ship, the Aurora, arrived just before the Treaty of Waitangi was signed in February 1840.

- There was serious damage from an earthquake in 1848, and again in 1855. And the land changed as well, for instance Rongotai/Kilbirnie was once a shallow channel and mud flats, and Mirimar an island. The 1855 quake was when the Rongotai Isthmus finally rose above sea level and became dry land, and allowed easy access to Mirimar. A reminder that we live on a major fault line!
- Wellington became the capital in 1865 after politicians of the day worried that lack of a centrally located capital (the previous capital being in Auckland) might encourage the more populous South Island to want to be its own colony. At the time the population of Wellington was 4,900 people - the smallest of our four main cities. Being 'central' and having an excellent harbour one could argue put Wellington 'on the map'.
- there have been many shipwrecks around the Wellington coast and the harbour entrance. The one we all remember was the Wahine in 1968, captured graphically by photographers of the day as it grounded onto Barretts Reef close to the shore. The Cook Straight is known to mariners as a notoriously tricky stretch of water, and even though the age of sail has long since gone, simply losing power in the straight in a strong southerly can be very risky!
- There has always been a shortage of land around Wellington. Much of the CBD is on reclaimed land (the original shoreline ran more or less where Lambton Quay and Courtney Place are now), and in early days a cable car (the Cable Car!) was needed to open up Kelburn and Karori to settlement.
- The New Zealand Centennial Exhibition was held over 6 months in 1939/40 at Rongotai, celebrating 100 years since the signing of the Treaty. The Exhibition was immensely popular with several exhibition courts and a three acre amusement park. Over 2.6 million visitors attended - New Zealand's population at the time was 1.6 million.
- Matiu/Somes Island, in the near center of the harbour, has a particularly rich history. It is hard to believe it was a popular picnic spot for Wellingtonians in the 1860s and

1870s, with steamer trips to and fro. Its unhappier history is one of being a quarantine station (in 1872 smallpox arrived in Wellington) and in 1919 during the influenza pandemic 600 people were quarantined there. The island was also used as an internment camp during both world wars - there were no successful escapes! Matiu/Somes is now a conservation island for endangered species, and the public can once again visit the island.

- Because of its known earthquake risk Wellington has gone through a long and complicated history of ensuring buildings are earthquake resistant. A fascinating experience in this regard is to do the Parliament Tour which shows how Parliament Buildings have been placed on huge rubber 'isolators' (as have other buildings) to protect from quakes. It is interesting to note that the Kaikoura earthquake in 2016 (at 7.8 magnitude and some 300 kilometres away) was strong enough to result in several Wellington high rise buildings having to be demolished for safety reasons.
- Although Wellington is well known for its windy climate few people give credit for the fact that we are also one of the sunniest large cities in Aotearoa. Did you know for instance that Wellington has significantly more sunny days than Auckland, about the same as Christchurch, and much more (or course!) than Dunedin or Invercargill? These statistics just confirm what many Wellingtonians already know - the weather can give us annoyingly windy days, but also provides spectacular sunny days as compensation. (Much of this must be put down to geography - Cook Straight and the ranges to the north and south, and the prevailing westerly weather coming across the Tasman Sea.)

Wellington is a city of contrasts - it is a city alive with culture, politics, social life, and commerce. There are many 'cool capital' places to see and experience. All in a geography and environment that is relatively unspoiled. An environment we need to protect.

Stuart Macdonald

Wellington

November 2023

Images

Index of Places and Images – see page 173

OPPOSITE PAGE

Wellington at Dusk

Wellington is a beautiful city but getting a calm harbour in order to capture reflections at dusk is pretty time consuming. Usually there is a breeze blowing, and as many Wellingtonians will tell you - often that breeze is a wind!

This shot is taken from Oriental Bay, about 100 meters north of the Band Rotunda.

Authors Note - Viewing Images:

Remember - the amount of light falling on a printed photograph determines how bright it will appear. So to fully appreciate an image you like, view it in a good light.

I hope you enjoy your travels through these pages!

SM





OPPOSITE PAGE

Wellington South Coast

A long exposure captures the movement of the waves around the rocks on the rough, exposed Wellington south coast.

It is possible to drive right round the Wellington coastline, from Owhiro Bay in the south all the way round past Seatoun, Shelly Bay and Oriental Bay in to the CBD.

LEFT

Welly 1 - The Cenotaph

The Wellington Cenotaph was officially opened in 1932 and replaced a temporary memorial put in place following World War I. It was called a 'Citizens Memorial' Cenotaph (the money had been raised by a citizens committee) and the souvenir programme for the dedication in 1932 referred to Pegasus (the winged stallion) spurning the spoils of war and rising into the heavens.

This shot is taken from the Bowen Street steps leading up to Parliament - a scene many who work in this area will be familiar with.



OPPOSITE PAGE

Kaitoke Revisited

The Kaitoke Regional Park is just north of Upper Hutt and was the venue for a number of the 'Lord of the Rings' scenes. This place is off the entry road about one kilometre past the first bridge - it can be a bit hard to find.

The profusion of moss covered rocks, hanging vines and ferns along the banks of the stream give you a feeling of being alone in the deepest New Zealand bush, but in reality you are barely half an hour from Wellington.



LEFT

Baring Head

Driving south from Wainuiomata you pass the entrance to Rimutaka Forest Park and a few kilometres later arrive at Baring Head. A short walk out onto the beach at dusk, on a clear evening, and this is what you see.





OPPOSITE PAGE

Near Civic Square 3

Te Aho a Maui in Civic Square represents the Maori myth whereby Maui fishes up the North Island from the sea. You can walk through the 'split pyramid' to the Sea Bridge on the other side. On this day storm clouds hang over Maui and the city.

The image is processed into Dramatic Tone.

LEFT

Near Civic Square 2

From Civic Square you can walk over the overpass, the 'City to Sea' bridge, to the Wellington waterfront area. The City to Sea bridge was opened in 1993. The shapes on the poles represent celestial navigation by the moon and stars, and the bridge itself incorporates elements of Maori mythology. In the background are representations of the uplifted landforms of Wellington.

This image is also in Dramatic Tone.



OPPOSITE PAGE

Featherston Street

Land has always been scarce in Wellington and reclamation of Wellington Harbour commenced from the 1850s. The original shoreline in the 1840s ran more or less where Lambton Quay and Courtenay Place are now. The Featherston Street area was one of the first reclaimed areas of the now CBD.

In fact it was originally proposed that the new settlement be based around Petone and the Hutt River.



LEFT

View from Featherston Street

If you look up, and a bit to the right, from the southern end of Featherston Street you will see this collection of buildings.





OPPOSITE PAGE

Massey Memorial

The Massey Memorial sits over on the Miramar Peninsula just above Point Halswell. There is a short track up to the Memorial from Massey Road.

William Massey was Prime Minister of New Zealand from 1912 to 1925. He died in office. The Memorial is also the mausoleum of Massey and was finally completed around 1930.

The words above the seven columns say 'A Memorial of Loyal and Faithful Service to King and Country'.

LEFT

Pegasus Books Cuba Mall

Here is an iconic Wellington bookshop - hidden away on the right about halfway up Cuba Mall. A wide range of second hand books are crammed into every nook and cranny - just wandering around is a delight!





OPPOSITE PAGE

Carpark Art

Graffiti art in the Brooklyn underground carpark. Right next to the Penthouse Cinema.

LEFT

Camel Grill

The Camel Grill food truck used to sit on the edge of Pidgeon Park (Te Aro Park) but now has its own premises nearby in Dixon Street. Here the area is usually thronging with people and it took some patient waiting to get this shot, with the owner having a quick break.





OPPOSITE PAGE

Dusk at Pauatahanui Inlet

An easy and pleasant late afternoon walk around part of Pauahatanui Inlet begins just past the Parramatta roundabout (heading north). Park the car at Dolly Varden Beach (on the right just over the bridge) and walk from there.

You can go past the boat sheds all the way round to Grays Road.

LEFT

Enjoy NZ

A walk up to the Makara Gun Emplacements is a must for any Wellingtonian, but do pick a nice day! From Makara Beach just follow the walkway off to the left round the coast.

It is a steady but fairly short climb, and the track is a bit unformed in places, but once at the top sitting beside the concrete bunkers, the view is breathtaking. Allow around 3-4 hours for an easy pace return walk.

The Marlborough Sounds and Mt Taranaki are visible in the distance.

