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Find out here about the history of our area since settlement in 1840 we got our name, our Maori heritage, and milestones of significance between then and now.

(Hutt City Council, n.d.)

Notable firsts in the Hutt Valley's history

Lower Hutt has celebrated a number of firsts in our history, and has become notable for a number of reasons, including:

- Petone was the site of the first formalised settlement of the New Zealand Company in 1840. We now celebrate Wellington Anniversary Day on 22 January every year – the date of the arrival of the first immigrant ship, the *Aurora*.
- Britannia, Wellington's first European township, was established on the banks of the Hutt River in February 1840.
- In the late 19th and early 20th Century, the lower part of the valley became known for its concentrated industrial base, providing services to all of New Zealand.
- The Patrick Street Worker's Settlement in Petone saw the first national example of cheap quality housing for New Zealand working families, with the first house completed in 1906.
- In the post-war period, Lower Hutt was at the forefront of Modern Movement architecture in New Zealand.

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The history of settlement

Over 150 years ago, the valley we know as Hutt was covered in dense forest and swamp, rich in native bird life.

Two waterways ran through the forest, entering the sea at the eastern side of Pito-one Beach. The pa Hikoikoi stood there. At the other end of the beach was Pito-one pa and an older pa, Tatau-o-te-po.

The chief of Pito-one pa, Honiana Te Puni Kokupu (known as Te Puni) and Te Wharepouri welcomed the members of the New Zealand Company on board the *Tory* in 1839. William Wakefield (the company's principal agent) brought plans for a settlement, drawn up in England, showing a grid-like street structure with a river running through. The plan was soon abandoned but Wakefield negotiated with Te Puni and Te Wharepouri to allow settlers to live on land surrounding the harbour.

The first immigrant ship, the *Aurora*, arrived 22 January 1840. Maori from the nearby pa assisted the settlers to build their homes on Pito-one Beach. These settlers established New Zealand's first bank and newspaper.

Subsequent settlers formed two distinct settlements. One, further inland from the beach, began the town of Britannia which peaked at 1,000 inhabitants. Within months of settlement, the Hutt River flooded the fledgling settlement.

Wakefield wanted to move the settlement to Thorndon on the far side of the harbour. The settlement moved, with only a few remaining at Petone (a corruption of Pito-one) to take up farming amidst a constant threat of flooding.

In 1846 the settlers were also threatened by conflict with the Maori which led to skirmishes and deaths. In 1855 a major earthquake lifted the area, draining a portion of the lower valley. In 1874 the Wellington-Wairarapa rail line was opened as far as Petone and the settlement's potential began to be realised.

In 1878 the Railway Department shifted its workshops from Pipitea to Petone and the following year James Gear began to buy land along the Petone foreshore for the Gear Meat

Preserving and Freezing Company. Soon many industries were attracted to the community and surrounding areas.

Maori and settlers

When the first British settlers arrived at Petone Beach in 1840, they were met by Te Atiawa and given the respect and care according to Maori custom.

This greeting came about because of a meeting in September 1839 between Lieutenant Colonel William Wakefield, representing the New Zealand Company, and significant rangatira (chiefs) of Te Atiawa in the Wellington and Hutt Valley regions. Two principal rangatira at this time were Honiana Te Puni and Te Wharepouri. The result was a written agreement which today is the foundation of the Wellington Tenth. This agreement effectively enabled the peaceful settlement of Wellington and the Hutt Valley.

Key to this agreement – the Port Nicholson Deed No 1 – was the provision that one tenth of what was termed Port Nicholson Block, would be set aside in perpetuity for the iwi. The Wellington Tenth trust, the iwi authority representing the descendants of these iwi, estimate the entire Block comprised about 200,000 acres. Notwithstanding the fact that one tenth of the land was never held in perpetuity and that there are several Treaty of Waitangi Claims addressing issues arising from this situation, Te Atiawa has always retained its position, which is to manaaki (care and nurture) those who settle within its tribal boundaries.

The Hutt City Council has maintained strong relationships with Te Atiawa and other iwi in its region, in particular those relationships fostered by leading elders such as Ihaia Porutu Puketapu and Makere Rangiatea Ralph Love (Sir Ralph Love).

How Hutt City got its name

The story in brief,

- Sir William Hutt (1801-1882) was an English MP. Although he never visited New Zealand, he was a founder of the New Zealand Company and other English groups that aimed to colonise New Zealand
- The Hutt River was previously called Heretaunga River. It was renamed Hutt in 1839 by William Wakefield (an early settler who arrived from England on the ship 'Tory')
- The first settlement on Petone foreshore was called Britannia. Those who lived further north were said to live "up the Hutt"
- As the numbers of settlers increased, people referred to living on the Upper Hutt or Lower Hutt
- The cities of Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt therefore took their names from their location on the Hutt River - which was named after Sir William Hutt of England

Background

Great Britain was experiencing a depression in the 1830s and colonisation was looked at as a possible solution to surplus population and widespread distress.

In 1829 Edward Gibbon Wakefield, foremost of a new school of social writers and thinkers, published A Letter From Sydney. He expounded a new, systematic and positive colonisation scheme emphasising care in the selection of would-be immigrants across all sections of society and a more enlightened attitude, for its time, to the indigenous inhabitants of lands proposed for colonisation.

In 1837 the New Zealand Association was formed in London with Francis Baring MP, Sir William Hutt MP, Sir William Molesworth MP and the Earl of Durham among its members. The Association

solicited support from the Government which, in essence, would allow them the maximum power with the minimum of responsibility

In a prophetic speech Mr Gladstone foresaw many difficulties connected with the alienation of Maori land and warned the House that great complexity of relations would ensue if the colonisers were given a free hand.

After this initial rejection by the Government Edward Gibbon Wakefield organised his colleagues into a more powerful combination which included Joseph Somes, the largest individual ship-owner in England.

Sailing to New Zealand

The New Zealand Company was accordingly founded on 3 May 1839 with a capital of 100,000 pounds. Three days later after a farewell speech by William Hutt as chairman of the gathering, Edward Gibbon, Wakefield's younger brother (36 year old Colonel William Wakefield) set sail for New Zealand on the *Tory* as the Company's principle agent.

William Wakefield had instructions to acquire from the Maori 110,000 acres of flat and fertile land in easy reach of a safe harbour, prepare for the early arrival of a body of settlers from England and then acquire as much land as possible to 'keep off land-sharks and squatters'. (The *Tory* left very hurriedly to beat the race against Sydney land speculators and other colonisation schemes under way in England and France, and in defiance of the Colonial Office and in contempt of the House of Commons who were planning to stop them.)

Arriving in Wellington

The *Tory* arrived in Wellington Harbour (Te Whanganui a Tara) on 20 September 1839 and the flat river valley of the Heretaunga (Hutt) became the focus for the initial site of the town of Wellington. In 1839 the Heretaunga River was renamed Hutt by William Wakefield after the founding member, director and chairman of the New Zealand Company, Sir William Hutt.

The confusion begins...

As the first settlement on the Petone foreshore and on the banks of the Hutt River was called Britannia, those living further north were distinguished by being referred to as living "up the Hutt". Thus, when E J Wakefield visited settlers at Britannia on the banks of the river during the winter of 1840 he referred to "visiting my friends up the Hutt".

As the number of settlers increased this general description of "the Hutt" proved to be too vague. People began to refer to those living on the Upper or Lower Hutt. Accordingly, S C Brees, describing the little hamlet of Aglionby, stated in the mid-1840s that it was sited "in the Lower Hutt". The names of the two hamlets, Aglionby or Richmond, failed to take permanent root as the basis for the city's present name. Instead variations on the name "Hutt" proliferated. The present city district was indiscriminately referred to by Brees as Lower Hutt, the Lower District of the Hutt and the Hutt.

This confusion continued for decades. To some extent it still continues today, the city being variously referred to as the Hutt, Lower Hutt or Hutt City.

It was the Post Office which began to enforce a certain uniformity. The postmark used in 1874 read The Hutt. In the mid-1880s this was changed to Hutt. The name became Lower Hutt on 1 December 1910 and finally, following local body amalgamation on 1 November 1989, became Hutt City on 8 October 1991. This was designed to distinguish Lower Hutt from Upper Hutt City. Thus the City was named after the river, not

after Sir William Hutt. Only the river can claim to have been named after that British Member of Parliament. Further to this, it is interesting to note that Sir William Hutt never visited New Zealand.

A timeline of Lower Hutt's history

From settlement in 1840 until present day, a chronology of some of the most significant events in Lower Hutt's history.

- 1840 European settlers arrive
- 1842 Hutt Road from Wellington
- 1843 Hutt-Taita Road
- 1844 First Hutt bridge
- 1845 Fort Richmond built
- 1846 Boulcott Farm incident
- 1847 Second Hutt bridge
- 1848 Severe earthquake
- 1854 Christ Church Taita
- 1855 Earthquake raises and drains Hutt lands
- 1856 Third Hutt bridge
- 1868 Flood destroys Hutt bridge
- 1872 Fourth Hutt bridge
- 1874 Hutt Railway opens
- 1877 Hutt County Council established
- 1881 First Hutt River Board formed
- 1891 Lower Hutt Borough Council established
- 1900 Gas is switched on
- 1901 Stopbanks begun. Population 1,822.
- 1904 Fifth bridge
- 1909 Melling suspension Bridge
- 1921 Population 5,000
- 1924 Hutt Road paved in Bitumen. Electricity switched-on
- 1927 Hutt Valley Branch Railway (to Waterloo)
- 1929 Hutt Railway workshops opened. Sixth (Ewen) bridge
- 1930 Seaview Oil tanks
- 1934 First Grandstand at Hutt Recreation Ground
- 1941 Lower Hutt becomes a city
- 1944 Hutt Hospital opens
- 1950 Council led by Mayor Percy Dowse begins development
- 1953 New St James Church. Hutt Valley Rail electrification
- 1956 War Memorial Library, Little Theatre, & Plunket Rooms
- 1957 Town Hall & Administration Block. New Melling bridge
- 1959 New Horticultural Hall
- 1960 Waiwhetu Marae
- 1968 Maungaraki subdivision
- 1971 Dowse Art Gallery
- 1979 Kennedy-Good bridge
- 1986 Queensgate shopping centre
- 1987 Demolition of Riddiford Baths
- 1989 Amalgamation of Lower Hutt, Petone, Wainuiomata & Eastbourne into Lower Hutt City - (Hutt City)
- 1996 Seventh (Ewen) Bridge
- 1999 Hutt Rec. Grandstand (rebuilt after 1998 fire)
- 1999 Cenotaph moved to Queens Drive War Memorial complex
- 2002 Laings Road Methodist Church & Hall demolished
- 2005 Westfield shopping centre redeveloped
- 2006 The New Dowse reopened