

**New Zealand 'Aotearoa' is "the land of the long white cloud"
and horizontal sundials.**

A sundial trail of five or six horizontal sundials put together by Rosaleen Robertson and Reid Cowan.

Timaru, South Island, New Zealand

General Location:

Latitude 44 degrees 24 minutes

Longitude 171 degrees 15 minutes

Longitude Time Correction 35minutes

Time Zone New Zealand Standard Time UT + 12 hours

Daylight Saving Time + 1 hour.

Timaru is ideal as a stopping point for travellers on State Highway 1, being roughly half way between the main centers of Christchurch and Dunedin on the scenic east coastal route; it could be a timely refreshment stop and is definitely a worthwhile sundial trail stop. Whilst Timaru is surely one of the smallest cities in New Zealand, it is endowed with more than its share of sundials with a ratio per head of population of 1: 5000.

The entire trail is just under 11.5 kms from Sundial 1 to 6 inclusive.

The first five sundials can be enjoyed in less than one hour if travelling by car, the distance one way is 5 kilometres (alternatively this would be a lovely urban walk). The sixth sundial is in the countryside, through the beautiful rural rolling landscape. The distance from sundial 5 to 6 one way is another 6.5 kms, so this adds another half to three quarters of an hour to get there and back to the city.

All up, the entire trail is approximately 90 minutes to two hours, but do allow much longer as you will find Timaru attractive and the local people friendly.

Reid has lived in Timaru for over 50 years and his mission now includes having all the dials in good working order. He has a team of local supporters and they are making excellent progress toward achieving the mission. Rosaleen visited to see the sundials and write up the trail based on Reid's notes, conversations and her impressions. Reid has prepared a booklet, A Guide to Understanding Sundials in the Timaru District (2004), which is an educational aid for children he has been teaching in some of the schools. Reid's contact details are either 00 64 3 6843787 or grcowan@maxnet.co.nz should you wish to make contact with him.

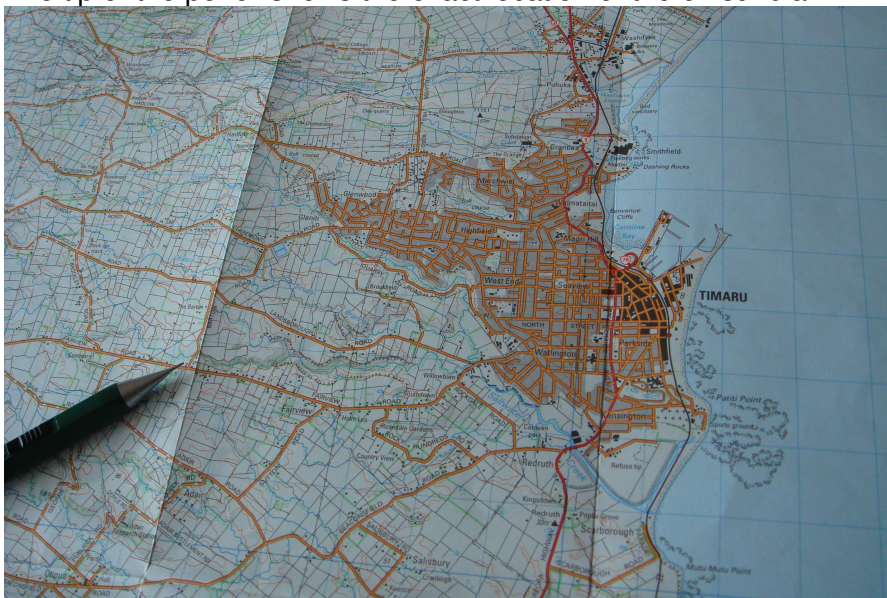
Firstly, to help with orientation, the following maps ^{1.} & ^{2.} provide a visual sense of the trail.

A map of Timaru showing the exact location of 5 of the 6 sundials.



Insert 0.1

The tip of the pencil shows the exact location of the 6th sundial.



Insert 0.2

References:

1 Central South Island Tourism www.southisland.org.nz

2 Linz

The first two sundials are in Timaru's famous public seafront carnival park, Caroline Bay, and the other four in school grounds. For access to the schools, it is advisable to visit during school hours, after 9am and before 5pm during school terms, and on arrival at the school, call by the school office to seek permission for access and directions.

1) The Memorial Wall Sundial Caroline Bay.

Location and access: Caroline Bay, Memorial Wall walkway.

Driving or biking: Follow the signs off State Highway No 1 turn off at Virtue Avenue toward the sea and follow the roadway to the main parking area by the paddling pool and walk south alongside the First World War - Memorial Wall - note the Memorial Wall is not high – see photographs below. It used to be high on the seaward side but a build-up of sand from the sea has created an expansive area which is now grassed that was previously beach.

Walking: The best route from Timaru would be to walk along the footpath beside 'The Bay Hill', go down the piazza steps past the rose garden to the Memorial Wall.

The sundial is located at about the center point along the Memorial Wall; the purpose of the sundial "was to bear the roll of honour listing the 11 Victoria Crosses won by New Zealand servicemen during the war". The entire wall features "97 plaques naming significant battlefields or location of war."³

Description:

Built in 1929 for The Caroline Bay Association (incorporated), the Association's statement of the accounts for the 1929-30 Carnival year includes an expenditure entry showing the VC Memorial Sundial as costing £117 8s 0p.⁴

Materials and dimensions

The sundial is made of brass, including the front plate, which is mounted on a large block of volcanic basalt called bluestone.

The height of the base is 110 cm, or 43 ", the face of the dial is 33cm, or 13", in diameter and the top is 56 cm, or 22" square.

Marker: The sundial maker was Mr James Stewart of Invercargill New Zealand, a well-known sundial maker of the times being credited with approximately 200 dials.⁵ His work is characterised typically by detailed fine engraving usually including a motto. On this dial the detail includes signs of the zodiac and Roman numerals, and the mottos are:

I count not the hours unless they be bright

HORAS NON MUMERO NISI SERENAS.

I don't count the hours unless they're tranquil i.e. 'I don't pay attention to time passing unless I'm at peace'.⁶

LEST WE FORGET.⁷

Care needs to be taken when reading this dial as here is no mention of the necessary 35 minute longitude correction. It is an idiosyncrasy is that the latitude and longitude recorded on the dial is incorrect, and combined with a bend in the gnomon, this makes a 7 to 8 minute accuracy difference in reading the time.

Comment

This is a significant monument, a fine construction and work of craft and art. It is classical, elegant, poignant, artisan and “probably Timaru’s most prominent sundial.”⁸



Insert 1.1



Inserts 1.3 & 1.4

References continued:

- 3 Timaru Herald, 4 November 2006
- 4 Timaru Museum archive
- 5 Massey, J. Southland Museum and Art Gallery letter and leaflet November 2006
- 6 <http://www.proz.com/kudoz/663177>
- 7 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ode_of_Remembrance
- 8 Cowan, J.R. A Guide to Understanding Sundials in the Timaru District. 2004

2) The Robert Heaton Rhodes Sundial, Caroline Bay.

Location and access: Caroline Bay, Memorial Wall walkway.

Stroll for 3 minutes back to the car park area and go to the lawn by the paddling pool, behind the roses, to find the sundial.

Description:

Commissioned in 1919 by The Bay Association to commemorate Mr Rhodes, who had been Deputy Mayor and Chairman of the Waimate County Council, and who had made a generous bequest to the Association. At that time, a newspaper report quaintly described it as a " sort of old-world decoration...and reminder of older countries..."⁹. Nearly 90 years later it is now settled in its third location. It is in good working order having been extensively restored and refurbished including an explanatory plaque¹⁰ which was added to assist with reading the time.

Materials and dimensions

The sundial is made of brass mounted on a large pedestal of hand lathed monumental basalt masonry. The base was shaped by Mr McBride. The name of the sundial marker is unknown. The face of the dial has only the hours marked on it.

The height of the base is 110 cm, or 43 ", the face of the dial is 43cm, or 13", square.

Historically the gnomon was prone to vandalism and through 'Kiwi ingenuity'¹¹ it is hoped that this will not happen again. Reid Cowan who supervised the refurbishment along with Robert Butler and Sons have devised screwed fittings (see photograph insert 2.2 below) that allow the sundial to be easily taken apart and repaired using a special tool for this purpose.

The inscription honours Mr Rhodes and the motto - HORAS NON NUMERO NISI SERENAS – is featured again.

Comment:

A grand sundial which has impressive presence. It is probably Timaru's first sundial and is now located in an excellent spot for the public to enjoy. A photograph from the 1940s¹² indicates that in its second location it was a popular attraction then also.



Inserts 2.1 & 2.2





Insert 2.3

References continued:

- 9 Timaru Herald, 24 December 1919
- 10 Cowan, J.R notes for reprint and update of A Guide to Understanding Sundials in the Timaru District
- 11 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_of_New_Zealand
- 12 'Snap' from a private photo collection

3) Waimataitai School Sundial.

Location and access:

Return up Virtue Avenue, left into Te Weka Street and then left back onto (State Highway 1) Evans Street. Take the first right into Trafalgar Street; find a park on the street. The school is located by a pedestrian crossing beyond which is an entry way on the right leading up a sealed one lane access road to the office.

Check in to the office at the end of the access road, it is well sign-posted.

The sundial is located behind the office in the rose bed on the north side of the school where another memorial to the First World War is also sited.

Description:

Materials and dimensions

The base has been replaced. The original was broken beyond repair. The new base is a vast improvement being a concrete classical column structure, custom built and positioned on an aggregate concrete foundation. The concrete base looks almost like marble in places.

The sundial is made of brass, including a new front circular brass reading band plate. It has been very carefully oriented to true north. The difference between true north and magnetic north at Timaru is “roughly 23 degrees”.¹⁴ The photograph (insert 3.1) immediately below shows the marker, drawn in yellow paint, on the court yard alongside a diagrammatic outline of New Zealand.

The height of the base is 102 cm, or 40 “, the face of the dial is 30.5cm, or 12”, in diameter and the top is 56 cm, or 22” square.

The motto is – *use thy time wisely*.

Comment:

If sundials have a gender this one is surely feminine. She presents as elegant, nubile and poised. The team of sundial supporters has not given up on gleaning more information about this sundial. The history of who made it and who gave it to the school remains a relative mystery.







Inserts 3.1, 3.2 & 3.3 above

References continued:

14 Cowan, J.R notes for reprint and update of A Guide to Understanding Sundials in the Timaru District

4) Craighead Diocesan School Sundial.

Location and access:

Proceed along Trafalgar Street, turn left into Selwyn and then right into Wai-iti taking the fourth on the right to Sealy Street which leads into Wrights Avenue. Craighead is on the right.

It is absolutely essential to make a prior arrangement to visit and on arrival to call at the office, just inside the front main door, to confirm permission and be shown to the lawn:

<http://www.craighead.school.nz/school/index.htm>

Telephone 00 64 3 688 6074 Facsimile 00 64 3 684 2250

E-Mail admin@craighead.school.nz

Description:

Materials and dimensions

The sundial is made of brass and graduated at hour intervals. The engraver was Mr McGlashan of Timaru. The base is a large bluestone bolster base. The top of the bolster has a finished sloping top, with the following words engraved:

“ONLY BE THOU STRONG AND VERY COURAGEOUS “.

The height of the base is 84 cm, or 33 “, the face of the dial is 23cm, or 9”, in diameter.

The sundial has been shifted into a better position on the lawn, it has good accuracy now and restoration work has been completed including a brass plaque to guide the process of calculating the time. The engraving on the inscription has also been improved; it reads clearly,

“Violet Monica Salmond Headmistress 1927 – 1930

Erected by the girls and staff: remembering”

Miss Salmond was a greatly respected and admired young lady principal of the school whose untimely and tragic death occurred during a simple surgical operation.

Comment:

There is a silence around this sundial; perhaps ‘touching’ describes the ambience, sentiment and sundial. Years of touching has created a smooth patina on the sloped surface at the top of the base.





Inserts 4.1 & 4.2 above

References continued:

13 Cowan, J.R notes for reprint and update of A Guide to Understanding Sundials in the Timaru District

5) Timaru Main School Jubilee Sundial at Bluestone School.

Location and access:

Leave Wrights Avenue and turn left into Craighead Street and right into Wai-iti Road again. Next take a very sharp left into Otipua Road and the fifth street on the left is Hurdley. Hurdley Street it is no exit and has ample street parking. At this point the distance is 5 kms from the Caroline Bay car park and sundials 1 and 2.

The sundial is located in the playground. The whole area is open and easily accessible. Again, as courtesy callers, should go to the office.

Description:

Materials and dimensions

The sundial, which was erected in 1935, is made of brass (including the front plate) and is mounted on a large block of volcanic bluestone basalt. It is recorded as being designed by Mr Rule and built by Mr McBride.¹⁴

The height of the base is 91 cm, or 36 ". The, now modern, face of the dial is 26cm, or 10", in diameter and octagonal shaped; a point of note is the Roman numeral four.

Comment:

Main School was destroyed by fire (1989) and a merger of Main and Bluestone arose out of district-wide amalgamations during a period of closures of schools.

The sundial commemorates a number of jubilees, a golden, diamond, platinum and the school centennial.

It forms very much part of outdoor furniture and sculptured landscape.



Insert 5.1 above & 5.2 below



References continued:

14 Cowan, J.R notes for reprint and update of A Guide to Understanding Sundials in the Timaru District

6) Claremont School sundial at Barton Rural School.

Location and access:

The distance from the fifth sundial to the sixth, is just under 6.5 kms.

Do a 'uey' (U turn) on Hurdley Street and then a left into Otipua Road, take the second turn on the right down Coonor Road which continues to join Fairview Road. Proceed approximately 4 kms from the Rockdale and Fairview Road intersections keeping an 'eye out' at the intersection of Fairview and Barton Roads, the school is on the right with ample parking on a gravelled area.

Description:

The sundial was commissioned by the Claremont School Board and no sooner was it in place than it was uplifted due to the closure of the Claremont School. It was 'purpose designed' for the Claremont School's 125th Jubilee in 2003 by Reid Cowan and the plate was cut by Robert J Butler and Son. One of the teachers is quoted as praising the dial being "... reliable to the minute... is a useful science teaching tool."¹⁵.

Materials and dimensions

The sundial is locally made of brass under computer-driven milling machine technology and the face is accurately graduated at 15 minutes intervals.¹⁶ It is mounted on a block of volcanic basalt (bluestone) which has holes in its structure as a result of air being trapped in the hot molten lava that erupted out of Mt Horrible which occurred two and a half million years ago. ^{17. 18.} The holes, and thus patterns, are interesting and give the base a unique character.

The height of the base is 89 cm, or 35 ", the face of the dial is 23cm, or 9", in diameter.

Plaques include the Claremont School Dates and the commemoration.

Comment:

This is the newest sundial in the Timaru area. Its 'high-tec', and now commercially produced, dial and slim angular lined base is typical of the 'relative simplicity' design of this era.





Inserts 6.1 & 6.2 above

References continued:

15 Community High Country Herald, December 15, 2004

16 Cowan, J.R notes for reprint and update of A Guide to Understanding Sundials in the Timaru District

17 South Canterbury Museum, Basalt: Timaru's Foundation

18 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timaru,_New_Zealand

19 www.zoomin.co.nz

This ends the Timaru Sundial Trail.

Further maps may be accessed from this excellent site as follows:

www.zoomin.co.nz . Just type in Timaru and refine your search by address location e.g. Caroline Bay, or a school name.¹⁸

Every effort has been made to make this accurate. The narrative will be reviewed and updated. Further sundials in neighboring townships may be added, as these are restored.

We sincerely hope you enjoy your time on the Timaru Sundial Trail.

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