



Introduction to Gold in Clutha Country

The Otago gold rush was part of a global phenomenon in the second half of the 19th Century. This 'human tsunami' started in California in 1849 where many gold prospectors from Australia learnt their trade. The gold rush shifted from California to Victoria and New South Wales in Australia in the 1850's, before arriving in Otago, New Zealand in 1861 with the discovery of gold at Evan's Flat by Edward Peters and at Gabriel's Gully by Gabriel Read.



CLUTHA
NEW ZEALAND

Gabriel's Gully

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Read's discovery – after initially being told he was on a 'wild goose chase' changed the course of history and laid a foundation for both Otago and New Zealand. By July 1861, the Lawrence-Tuapeka area was very much immersed in a gold rush, with the district's population swelling to over 11,000 compared to the less than 6,000 in Dunedin at the time. The gold rush spread throughout Clutha Country with payable gold being discovered at Waitahuna, Waipori, Woolshed, Glenore, Adams Flat, Manuka Creek, Table Hill and West Otago.

On arrival at the field a miner had to stake and register his claim, which was a small plot of land 7.3 square metres. A miner would dig his claim area with a pick and shovel using other equipment such as a whip, as he dug deeper. The gravel was then washed away through a cradle or sluice box, allowing lighter particles of spoil to be washed away.

This left the heavier gold and sand lying on a bed of course cloth or matting, to be panned later to separate the gold. Miners usually worked in small teams in the early days camping alongside their claim for ease of work and to protect their areas from claim jumpers! Once gold fields were established, heavy machinery was brought in to cope with the back breaking work. These included sluices, water races, dredgers and turbine penstocks. Many of the goldfields had amazing feats of mechanical engineering. Clutha was at the centre of the Gold Rush era and this brochure will give you a brief outline of the history of Gold in Clutha Country.

Dates, timelines and significant names will be noted and we hope this brochure will encourage you to visit our beautiful area to visit the significant areas where gold was first discovered in New Zealand.

Glossary of Terms

- Adit:** horizontal entrance to a mine in the side of a hill.
- Alluvium:** deposit of earth or gravel found on the riverbeds.
- Battery:** block of metal stampers used for crushing quartz.
- Conglomerate:** hard mass which can contain gold or other precious metals.
- Claim:** a miner's exclusive use of a piece of ground.
- Cradle:** box like apparatus used to wash gold bearing material.
- Diggings:** any area where gold is or has been extracted.
- Dredge:** floating platform with gold extracting and processing machinery, used to extract gold from a riverbed or bank.
- Gold Fever:** irresistible urge to search for gold.
- Goldpan:** round metal dish used to wash gravel to recover gold.
- Joss House:** A Chinese temple or shrine to worship.
- Nugget:** piece of gold which is larger than a flake.
- Prospect:** to search for gold.
- Sluice:** jet of water fired from a sluice gun to wash down gold bearing material and run it through a sluice box.
- Sluice Box:** long wood or metal channel used to wash material containing gold.
- Stamper:** metal weights used to crush ore; usually arranged in a Battery.
- Spoil:** material brought up in the mining or dredging for gold.
- Tailings:** debris left after sluicing or dredging for gold.
- Water-race:** channel built to bring water to where sluicing takes place.
- Workings:** abandoned area where goldminers once extracted gold.

Memorable Gold Rush Characters

Thomas Gabriel Read (1825—1894)

Thomas Read, better known by his second name Gabriel, was born in Hobart, Tasmania on the 21st August 1825.

Gabriel's childhood was marred by a hunting accident in which he suffered serious head injuries. The injuries left him prone to bouts of violent and bizarre behaviour which would plague him for the rest of his life.

At the age of 24, Gabriel travelled to the United States of America to join the Californian gold rush of 1849 to seek his fortune but he did not have much luck.

Gabriel travelled to Victoria in Australia to join the gold rush of 1851.

During both of these prospecting adventures Gabriel gained valuable knowledge, experience and funds to allow him to travel to Otago at a later date.



Gabriel Read

Gabriel arrived in Dunedin from Hobart on a gold prospecting tour in February of 1861. A few months later whilst making his way to Tuapeka he met with George Munro (the first permanent resident in the Lawrence area). After a conversation regarding gold, George Munro showed Gabriel where Edward Peters had been prospecting at Evan's Flat two years earlier. George invited Gabriel to stay that night with him and his family. The following morning both men headed up the ridge above George's humble dwelling, it was here they parted company, George to tend his flock and Gabriel to prospect the gully that ran parallel to Munro's on its eastern side, a gully that Munro called 'Glen Dhu' - The Black Valley.

On the 25th May 1861 Gabriel discovered gold in the Tuapeka Stream - a side stream of the Tuapeka River - which was to change Otago life dramatically. In his own words "At a place where a kind of road crossed on a shallow bar I shovelled away about two feet of gravel, arrived at a beautiful soft slate and saw the gold shining like the stars in Orion on a dark frosty night". In Gabriel's honour, the gully was renamed Gabriel's Gully.

In November of 1861, Gabriel received a reward of five hundred pounds (the equivalent of about \$500,000 today) for his discovery of payable gold. Then, to his surprise, he received a further five hundred pounds, this time in recognition of his discovery.

In 1863, Gabriel returned home to Tasmania where he became a

farmer and married his cousin, Amelia Mitchell. During his time back home in Tasmania, his violent behaviour grew worse and became unmanageable in 1887 when he was admitted to the New Norfolk Hospital for the Insane near Hobart. He was only 55 years old. He remained at the hospital until his death from a stroke in October 1894 at the age of 62 years old.

This was a tragic end of the man who directed the destiny of Otago along new and prosperous paths.



Gabriel Read Cairn Memorial at the entrance to Gabriel's Gully

Leave the rest of the world behind, come experience the welcomes and wonders of Clutha Country!

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Catlins Information Centre & Owaka Museum
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Milton Information Centre
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Lawrence Information Centre & Museum
Address: 17 Ross Place, Lawrence
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Tapanui Service Centre, Information Centre & Library
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Memorable Gold Rush Characters

Peter and Janet Robertson

Peter Robertson was born in Menstrie, Stirlingshire, Scotland, on the 24th April 1817. His wife Janet Gillespie was born in the village of Dollar, Clackmannan in the south of Scotland on the 24th August 1820.

They were married in Logie, Perth, Scotland on the 14th November 1840. By 1858 they had five children, Margaret, James, Catherine, Thomas and Peter.

Peter and Janet were thinking about emigrating to America when they were invited to a lecture on New Zealand. This lecture changed their minds and they set sail for New Zealand on the 12th November 1858 on board the 500 tonne sailing ship 'Robert Henderson'. The journey lasted an arduous three months and ended when they docked at Port Chalmers on February 1859.

Work was scarce in Dunedin and Peter took a job breaking stone before being offered work as a back country shepherd by John Cargill who had a sheep run at Tuapeka. The run holders did not live on these runs but lived down country, mustering only for shearing or sending stock to market. There were huts on the runs that were used while this work was being done.

The Robertsons' trip to their "hut in the hills" involved three days travelling by bullock cart to Taieri Ferry at Henley. Here they had to wait for calm weather to be transported in canoes by the local Maori. On reaching Tokomairiro they stayed at the Meadowbank Homestead of their employer, John Cargill.

They then carried on their journey by bullock team to the hill country of Tuapeka. The last day of their journey was an extremely long one as their team of bullocks were so exhausted by the hill country they stopped in the middle of Waitahuna River and refused to go any further. Peter carried each of his family in waist deep water to the other side and they all carried on walking to their 'hut' at Clark's Flat. On reaching the hut after midnight it is said that Janet sunk to the ground totally exhausted.

The Robertsons became known as kindly, hospitable people as many travellers stayed over night and informed them of news of the world. The travellers would then be sent on their way with a hearty breakfast prepared by Janet accompanied by a generous dose of Peter's good humour.

Over the next few years they added to their family with the addition of three more children—Jessie, Robert and William.

They were at Clark's Flat for two more years until an event occurred that was about to change their lonely existence. A visitor named Gabriel Read shared their hospitality where they fed and made room for him to sleep on their floor. Whilst talking, they discovered Gabriel's quest for gold. Janet suggested he may be wasting his time but at this Gabriel said he would give Janet some of the first gold he found. Gabriel was true to his word as two days later he discovered payable gold at Gabriel's



Peter Robertson Janet Robertson

Gully and he presented Janet with the gold. Peter and Janet sent the gold back to Scotland to be made into three rings, two remained in Scotland and the third ring is still in the possession of the descendants of the Robertsons.

The Robertsons left their wee cottage a few years later due to the land they worked being proclaimed a goldfield. They moved into Lawrence, purchased some land and built the first weatherboard house in the township. Peter died on the 24th October 1895 and Janet passed away on the 11th April 1902 in their weatherboard home on Whitehaven Street. Both Peter and Janet were laid to rest in the Lawrence Cemetery.

George and Helen Munro

The Munros had the distinction of being the first permanent residents in the Lawrence area. Both of the Munros were born in Sutherland, Scotland in 1829 and 1831 respectively.

George, Helen, and Helen's niece Annabella McLeod sailed for New Zealand aboard the ship "Strathmore" arriving at Port Chalmers near Dunedin on the 1st October 1856. Prior to leaving Scotland, George had secured employment as a Sheppard for Smith and Allan who farmed at Tokomairiro, but they also had a sheep run inland at Tuapeka.

After acquainting themselves with the farming operation they travelled up to Tuapeka along with 1,800 merino sheep. After first taking residence at the head of Clark's Flat they moved up to Munro's Gully to be more centrally located for the sheep run. It was at their Munro's Gully home that they had their family, Ann, Arabella, John, Alexandrina and George. They suffered terrible loss when their first born Ann died of diphtheria at the age of seven.

Living in the Tuapeka area was a very lonely and isolated life at times, particularly so for a woman. One day Helen, who hadn't had any female company for almost a year, noticed from the door of their cottage a light form coming through the manuka scrub away in the distance. Thinking she was at last to have a woman's company, she rushed inside, changed her dress and set up the table with her best china and linen and rushed outside to give welcome. Helen was so upset to discover it was not a woman but only a cow, its white face giving the impression of woman's attire. She went back into the cottage weeping with disappointment.



George Munro Helen Munro

In May 1861, George was out checking the sheep when he met up with a gold prospector by the name of Gabriel Read. George showed Gabriel where Peter Edwards (Black Peter) had prospected at Evans's Flat two years previously and George invited Gabriel to spend the night with him and his family. Gabriel accepted the kind offer. The next morning George walked with Gabriel up the ridge between Munro's and Glen Dhu Gully where they parted company; George to tend to his flock while Gabriel scrambled his way down through tangled bush to the Glen Dhu stream. Later that day Gabriel discovered gold, a major strike that was to become the Tuapeka Gold Fields.

While Gabriel was staying with the Munros, Helen showed a great interest in how gold was recovered, apparently Helen had previously

found a few small pieces of gold in the creek but had not considered them to be of much value.

Following Gabriel's discovery Helen did amateur prospecting in Munro's Gully using a dish and a butchers knife. Helen was successful in finding payable gold and caused a 'gold rush' to Munro's Gully.

Helen will always be remembered as the first and only woman to discover part of a major goldfield in New Zealand.

As the land the Munros worked on was proclaimed a goldfield in August 1861, the Munros had to leave as they did not own the land.

They eventually settled in a cottage at Evan's Flat on a hill that is still known as Munro's Hill, a little way along on the road named after them Munro Road approximately 2 kilometres outside Lawrence on SH8.

George died on the 21st July 1912 and Helen passed away not long after that on the 16th June 1913. Both were laid to rest in Lawrence Cemetery.



The Munro's final resting place

Edward Peters (unknown—1893)

Edward Peters (Black Peter), a Eurasian, was born in the Satara region of Western India around 1826, and raised in the Hindu religion. It is believed that he had Portuguese parentage on one side.

Little is known about Edward's early life in India, or when he left to travel and find his fortune. Edward arrived in Port Chalmers, Otago in 1853 whilst working as a cook on the sailing ship 'Maori'. It was from the 'Maori' that Edward took an informal, unannounced or abrupt departure otherwise known as "French leave". Following handing himself into the police Edward was sentenced to six weeks hard labour in the Dunedin Gaol where he was actually the only prisoner. On completing his six weeks hard labour Edward was free to settle in Otago.

Edward left Dunedin soon after and travelled south into the Tokomairiro, Tuapeka and Molyneux areas where he worked for land owners who were breaking in land and establishing their properties. Edward arrived in the Tuapeka area some time in 1857 and was employed at Belamy Station.

In early 1858, George Munro (the first permanent resident in the Tuapeka area), was with Edward when he first found gold from the Tuapeka River in its natural state. Edward and party were camped by the Tuapeka River near Evan's Flat and following their evening meal Edward took the wash basin down to the river's edge to clean the dishes. It was then he decided to pan for gold. Edward was very lucky that evening as he found enough gold to be turned into a ring which was given to a Mr Dawson who, along with Edward, was moving sheep for a farmer named Archibald



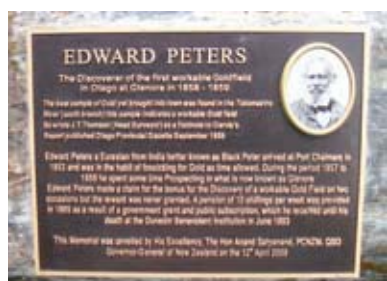
Edward Peters

Anderson. The ring can be viewed at the Otago Settlers Museum in Dunedin today.

Edward returned to prospect in the areas around the South Branch of the Tokomairiro River in what is now known as Glenore. It was at this time, mid to late 1858 that he took the samples of gold he had recently found to Dunedin. The samples very much impressed the Head in the ranges on Walter Miller's property, the Roxburgh Estate situated in the Glenore area.

By 1860 Edward was again at the Tuapeka River prospecting where he met with J T Gillies who was searching for his lost horses. As a result of this meeting, Gillies passed on the information Edward had spoken about onto Gabriel Read when he met Gabriel at a political meeting at the Tokomairiro. This conversation led Gabriel to Tuapeka and his subsequent discovery of payable gold.

The Otago Provincial Council offered a "Bonus for the Discovery of a Remunerative Goldfield within the Province of Otago". Edward applied twice for the 'bonus' but unfortunately for Edward both claims were rejected.



You are able to view Edward's memorial situated at the Mt Stuart Reserve on SH8 just before you enter the Manuka Gorge

Mr Jenkinson of Port Molyneux. Edward died on 6 June 1893, whilst in the care of the Dunedin Benevolent Institution where he had been moved too once he was unable to care for himself anymore. He was laid to rest in Dunedin's Southern Cemetery.

Sam Chew Lain (unknown—1903)

It is believed that Sam was a Hakka Cantonese probably from Baoan or Huiyang country which boarded onto Kowloon province.

Sam had been a miner in Victoria in Australia before coming to Otago in the 1860s to mine at Munro's Gully.

He was a well known individual in Lawrence. He joined another Chinese man named Wong On in the hotel trade and they owned and managed

the Chinese Empire Hotel at Lawrence Chinese Camp. Sam had been granted a billiard licence in 1877 and then in June 1878 he was also granted a publican licence and a midnight licence.

Sam was naturalised in 1872. Later that same year Sam married Amelia Newbiggins, a local girl and they celebrated at the Chinese Empire Hotel with members of the Chinese community. Sam and Amelia's marriage was one of the first mixed race marriages in the area, which caused social outcry.

Sam's business partner Wong On left the Lawrence area to travel back to his homeland of China in 1881. It was then that Sam became sole proprietor of the hotel.

Sam spoke fluent English and because of this he worked as a court interpreter for the local police and court. Sam Chew Lain's hotel business brought him into contact with a wide clientele. One author noted that the hotel was well known "for its good conduct and fine quality liquors". The same author recalled that Sam "served no one whom he judged to be too young (the usual test being the possession of whiskers) and further more, when he considered his customers had had sufficient, he would suggest it was time they went home to dig their gardens!"

Sam died on the 15th March 1903 and his obituary stated that he had a "reputation for thorough honesty and scrupulous exactness in business matters ... proved in every respect a thoroughly successful businessman ... To his countrymen and Europeans alike he has proved in many cases a friend indeed and stories of large hearted generosity are legion".

Sam's wife Amelia passed 10 years later on the 27th July 1913, both Sam and Amelia are in turned in Lawrence Cemetery.

On his death, Sam's Lodge St George Masonic brotherhood erected a tomb for him. It is in European style and built of limestone block walls and a slate roof. Amelia was buried along with Sam following her death.



The only remaining buildings at the Lawrence Chinese Camp: Sam's Hotel and the Stables

Sam Perkins—The False Gold Rush

Sam Perkins' origins, like so many of Otago's many early inhabitants, remain a mystery. What we can be certain of is that Sam worked at the Toi-tois whaling station west of Fortrose in Southland between 1835—1836. Sam and his wife settled in Southland with a number of other early settlers and they began subsistence farming, building simple cottages, clearing and cultivating a few hectares of land and rearing goats and poultry.

Left to himself, Sam would probably have lived out his days raising his

crops and his goats, hunting pigs, hauling provisions, for run holders, but the gold rushes of 1861 were to change all that.

Sam left Toi-tois shortly after the announcement of Gabriel Read's discovery of gold at Tuapeka hoping to find his fortune. In late November 1861, many of the miners working in the Tuapeka goldfield decided to leave and search for gold in and around the Blue Mountains after hearing news of a new gold discovery. In the excitement about the new gold rush, Sam Perkins became a man who would live to regret his storytelling and scheming.

William Boyer, a Waitahuna miner later recalled "We saw the famous Sam Perkins standing upon an empty flour barrel addressing the crowd. He had about 3 dwt of gold in his hands and he said 'come with me and I will show you where you can get plenty more like this'. The next morning Sam Perkins and a three horse dray and about 500 diggers left Waitahuna for Sam's bogus gold rush. My mate went with them. Many of the men left good claims a-begging and I got a good one in the middle of the flat. Ten days later Frank came back, his clothes torn to rags by the scrub, starving and really glad to be back and no gold to speak of". The prospectors numbers increased from 500 to 3,000 at its peak once the news of a new goldfield spread. Sam was leading these men on a wild goose chase. After travelling by foot for many days from Waitahuna towards Southland where the promised goldfield supposedly was, many of the diggers had left the group to go back to where they started from, weak from hunger and exhaustion. Suspicions began to grow between the diggers and they placed a guard on Sam 24 hours a day. For two more days Sam led the gradually diminishing assortment of diggers and their few drays further and further towards Southland. The few tracks they followed were extremely primitive and the going was very hard. Although many of the diggers were exhausted, Sam's insistence that they were quite near their goal restored some of their confidence. They decided that a small party would accompany Sam to the site the next morning. The following morning Sam set off with a small party of men, this was his day of judgement. One of the men remarked on a likely looking gully and Sam said 'yes' rather hopefully 'it's a splendid gully'. Sam was grasping at straws to make himself not to look a liar: "Two men took several hundred pounds weight of gold out of here last summer. As soon as the men heard this they fanned out to search for the abandoned workings. They searched from one end of the gully to the other but were unable to find anything. Sam realised the game was up and the men would realise he had led them on a wild goose chase. Theatrically Sam, unbuttoned his blue shirt, bared his breast and confessed to the miners what he had done. He invited the two men with guns to end his life. Luckily for Sam they were not quick tempered men. They marched Sam back to the other men to pronounce sentence on him. After much discussion and cries to "hang him", Sam's punishment was decided upon by the men. The first part was to shave Sam's head to which there was a loud cheer from the crowd as a digger delivered rough justice with a large pair of sheep shears, the digger chopped Sam's hair right back to the skin and his beard shaved for good measure. The whipping then followed, it is believed that Sam received two dozen lashes.

There are many alternative accounts of exactly what happened. It is believed that Sam died after crossing a river safely near Fortrose in either late 1862 or early 1863. He has managed to navigate the river and walked for about two kilometres where he died of unknown causes.



Tuapeka Gold Fields

Gabriel's Gully

When you visit Gabriel's Gully take a moment and listen. It is so peaceful and quiet, the only noise you will hear is from native birds which have made the area their home. A very far cry from the gold rush days when it was a treeless landscape bustling with people and noisy machinery working 24 hours a day, with many loud explosions.

Following Gabriel Read's discovery the first rush saw prospectors using basic equipment of a pan and a cradle or sluice as they first hunted for alluvial gold in the river gravels.

By September 1861, over 6,000 Miners were camped throughout Gabriel's Gully and nearby Weatherstons. By the end of 1861 there were over 10,000 people on the goldfields. All the ground in Gabriel's Gully was occupied with mine claims. By then gold had also been found

at Munro's Gully, Evans Flat, Tuapeka Flat, Waitahuna and Waipori.

Water races were dug from neighbouring rivers to carry precious water which was used to gradually wash the hill into sluice boxes to recover the gold. Gunpower and dynamite were used to break up the rock. Adits were driven deep into the hill to get at the lower layers that carried the higher quantities of gold. The land is still marked where this happened. New methods of freeing gold were introduced, stamping batteries which were built to stamp conglomerate finely enough so that the gold could be released.

Hydraulic elevators were introduced to the goldfield later on, sluiced gravel would be raised by suction and water pressure. Gabriel's Gully was to become well known for its mammoth engineering feats, the introduction of new techniques and its longevity as a goldfield. Above



Gabriel's Gully at its peak, no trees but many people, tents and piles.

all it is remembered as the place where the Otago gold rush began. Mining continued in the area until the 1930's with some intermittent activity extending into the 1950's.

Weatherstons



Remains of Hart's Black Horse Brewery at Weatherstons

Although only one gully east of Gabriel's Gully the Weatherstons goldfield was not discovered until mid July 1861, when the Weatherston brothers found gold while on a pig shooting trip. The field grew very fast with the Otago Witness reporting on November 30 "that 1,500 miners had arrived at Weatherstons from Waitahuna over a few days".

It was also claimed that over four week period more gold was recovered from Weatherstons than from Gabriel's Gully. This led a push to have the Government Camp moved from Gabriel's to Weatherstons. This was unsuccessful. Over this late 1861 period, Weatherstons was the gayest and noisiest town on the Goldfields. However, it also suffered the fastest reduction of miners when the news of the Hartley and Reilly find at Dunstan came through in August 1862. Only two miners remained, Ben Hart and Sam Gare. The population slowly returned as miners worked over the material again.

Lawrence Chinese Camp



Lawrence Chinese Camp, circa 1904

With the loss of miners to other goldfields, the Provisional Government in 1865 invited Chinese miners from the goldfields in Victoria, Australia to come and work at the Tuapeka goldfield. Chinese miners started to arrive in Tuapeka in 1866. They reworked a lot of the harder areas that the other miners had left as unproductive but through their perseverance, determination and hard work they were able to make a living. Their arrival caused political and social reaction, often amounting to intolerance and persecution from the township folk. Anti-Chinese feeling was such that the Chinese tended to move together and live in separate camps. In 1867, a borough council bylaw prohibited the Chinese from camping or settling in the township of Lawrence, so a Chinese camp was established on designated ground just outside the Lawrence town boundary. Within the camp the Chinese established their own stores, a hotel, gambling dens and a Joss house (relocated to Maryport Street in Lawrence) in an area of less than an acre. In 1883, a visitor to the camp described it as narrow, dark and dingy with buildings constructed of boards, kerosene tins and sugar bags. Sadly part of the camp was destroyed by fire in 1898.



Lawrence Chinese Camp's Joss House now situated on Maryport Street in Lawrence

The image to the left shows an ordered settlement of weatherboard cottages with a street lamp and permanent ladder for lighting the lamp. Plans are in place to rebuild the Chinese camp as a heritage site and tourist attraction.



Early Chinese miner's dwelling

Waitahuna Gold Trail

Very shortly after the 1861 gold discovery at Gabriel's Gully, Gabriel Read and Captain William Baldwin also found gold at Waitahuna Gully close to where the gold miners memorial now stands.

Waitahuna Gully became the first settlement in the area and the height of the Gold rush, the population was close to 4,000 for a short time compared to the population of Waitahuna which nowadays stands at about 60. Waitahuna quickly established to provide the needs of the many miners and gold prospectors. The township had five hotels, five stores, a butcher, a baker, an Athenaeum Hall, a church, a resident doctor and a school.

Various methods of mining continued in the area for over 80 years after the first discovery of gold. Approximately 295kms of races were constructed to bring water from the hills for sluicing away surface material to reach the gold bearing cement below. The outline of a former water race may be seen on the hillsides on the left when



Sluicing at Waitahuna

travelling along Mitchells Flat Road. At least four stamping batteries operated for a short time. The remains of the Quartz mining, Canton Battery can be seen at Reedy Creek before reaching the Mitchells Flat and Waipori Road junction. Several bucket dredges worked the Waitahuna flats and the gully. A small pond behind the former Waitahuna sale yards is the site of the last dredging operation.

From 1861 to 1874, 156,603 oz of gold was mined in the Waitahuna area. Mining ceased in the Waitahuna area in 1947.



Waitahuna information board on Boyldon St



Waitahuna Gold Miners Memorial situated on Waitahuna Gully Road

A town site was surveyed in 1865 with streets named after the main ones in Melbourne Australia. By 1864 there were still eight hotels operating (down from 14) as well as stores, drapery, post office, blacksmith, news agent, watch maker, iron monger, butcher and two banks. A school was opened in 1868 and closed in 1921. You are able to visit the tranquil ruins of the brewery at Weatherstons set amongst woodland garden walks featuring a vintage rhododendron forest, surrounded by fields of daffodils planted in 1885.

Blue Spur



The first Blue Spur settlement was at the head of Gabriel's Gully on the flat. It quickly became untenable and by 1864 the settlement moved to the top of the ridge away from flooding and mining and just south of the conglomerate. It was known that there was no gold found north of the conglomerate so work focused on washing the material to recover the fine alluvial gold trapped in it.

The town prospered from 1864 - 1868 with two of every type of store. After the top road to Lawrence was built the retailers moved down to Lawrence but many miners remained. A school opened in 1867 and closed in 1925. The quality of the schooling was evident in three pupils all becoming Judges of the High Court. In the 1880s, the population was 500 and the school had over 200 pupils and five teachers.



Blue Spur

Gold in The Catlins

Not much is known about finding gold in the Catlins but the information that can be sourced clearly proves that gold was found at the Chaslans coastline and further south at Waikawa and Waipapa. The Otago Witness, a newspaper at the time, states "reported over 200 men, were working on the Waikawa Beaches". Waikawa is approximately 18 kilometres from the Otago/Clutha Country boundary.

Within Clutha Country, gold was discovered at Wallace's, Long and Tautuku Beaches. But getting to these places was one of hardship as noted in the Mataura Ensign newspaper dated 13 July 1872. "The mining population is very small, not exceeding a dozen parties, with from two to six persons in each party. There is room for a great many more, but the difficulty is for strangers to know where to set in. Those men who have stuck at it for years look upon it as theirs by right of discovery, and are not at all disposed to "lay" new comers "on" They have moreover, secured all the more available water rights, so that no man could expect to do any good unless prepared to go to some outlay. The matter just stands thus; There is not a man in the place who does not know where to go and lay his hands on a few ounces if he required it, and yet a stranger coming in might starve if he had nothing in his pocket. What is known as Wallace's Beach is about to be taken up again. The difficulty of working beaches in this direction is that unless the party has boats it is next to impossible to get "tucker" through the bush track."

Even with the hardship involved men were still tempted to try their luck in these inhospitable areas. The gold they discovered and mined was not on the scale of the Tuapeka goldfields but many a man made a handsome living from their finds.



The Consolidated Company employed 80 - 100 miners. By 1902, the population was 200 servicing 40 miners.

Mining the conglomerate on Blue Spur reflects the changing technology of gold recovery as it moved from small shafts to sluicing, to blasting and to underground tunnels. As a consequence the majority of the reef was washed away down the valley towards Lawrence. Visitors today can view the size of the excavations and can walk around the Interpretive Track which explains the relevance of each site. Currently all that remains at Blue Spur is one residence and the old butchers shop. An information kiosk provides some local information. It is a worthwhile site as part of a tour of the Tuapeka Goldfields.

Waipori Gold Fields

Gabriel Read found evidence of gold whilst carrying out a 'quick' examination of the area. Following this Tuapeka Goldfield was extended to include Waipori. Unlike the other gold fields situated in Clutha Country, Waipori was not involved in a 'gold rush'. The early miners found Waipori extremely wet, barren and very isolated with no shelter from the bitterly cold winds. Even so, by the end of 1861 there were approximately 1,000 miners in the area and a settlement had been developed at the junction of the Waipori River and Lammerlaw Creek, but it was not until 1865 that the area was fully worked.

Not one of the better known goldfields, Waipori provided a gold prospector named Davies a amazing find of a gold nugget weighing 700 grams in 1863. The 'official' discovery in December 1861 was made by a prospector of by the name of O'Hara in one of the tributaries of the Waipori River. By 1865, Waipori was a well established township, and had a thriving business community which included 11 hotels, two schools, five stores, a butcher and two bakers. In 1924, the go ahead was given after much opposition to commence building of the Waipori Hydro Power station as well as the first of the Waipori Dams to be built over the Waipori River. Many buildings of the old township were moved away, but some along with gold mining claims now lie under the water of Lake Mahinerangi. Two gold mining sites were spared and set aside as historical reserves, now under the management of DoC. These reserves are close together and can be visited using the road between Lake Mahinerangi and Lawrence. These reserves can be found approximately 25 km from Lawrence and keep your eyes open for signage as they are often covered in moss or long grass. Once a bustling township with many gold prospectors, Waipori now has a number of cribs dotted around Lake Mahinerangi and houses are perched on the cliff faces amongst bush and trees.



Blue Spur Cottage, c.1890



Gabriel's Gully today



GABRIEL'S GULLY
GOLDRUSH 150TH



Golden Celebration • www.lawrence.co.nz • 18-21 March 2011

Today you are able to follow walking tracks which Gabriel Read and his compatriots would of walked on whilst searching for their fortunes. Walk the Interpretative Track which encircles Gabriel's Gully. Allow one to one and half hours to complete the track at a leisurely pace. You will find many interpretative panels on the track explaining the features that can still be seen today including old water races and a battery and stories of what life was like on the goldfields.

Please note, You are able to fossick, legally, for gold at Gabriel's Gully and you can hire a gold pan at Lawrence Information Centre and Museum for a small fee.



Gold in Clutha Country Timeline

- 1849 - Gabriel Read sails to the United States of America to join the Californian Gold rush.
- 1851 - Gabriel joins the Australian Gold rush in Victoria at Buninyong, near Ballarat.
- 1853 - Edward Peters (better known as Black Peter) arrives in Otago onboard the sailing ship 'Maori' as a cook.
- 1857 - In January 1857, George and Helen Munro become the first permanent residents in the Tuapeka area.
- 1857 - Edward Peters finds small quantities of gold in the Tuapeka River at Evans Flat.
- 1858 - Edward Peters discovers a workable gold field in the South Branch of Tokomairo River at Glenore.
- 1859 - Peter and Janet Robertson settle in the area of Clark's Flat after an arduous journey from Scotland.
- 1861 - Gabriel Read arrives in Dunedin from Hobart on a gold prospecting tour on the 16th February.
- 1861 - Gabriel Read finds payable gold in the Tuapeka Stream, a side stream of the Tuapeka River on the 25th May. The little valley was named in his honour - 'Gabriel's Gully'.
- 1861 - Helen Munro finds payable gold in a gully west of Gabriel's in early July. The Gully a side branch of the Tuapeka River is named Munro's Gully.
- 1861 - Gabriel Read and Captain William Baldwin find payable gold at Waitahuna Gully on the 20th June.
- 1861 - Brothers, John and William Weatherston find payable gold in a gully east of Gabriel's Gully.
- 1861 - In October, pioneer David Evans proves there is payable gold at Evan's Flat.
- 1861 - In November Gabriel Read receives the reward of five hundred pounds for the discovery of a payable goldfield.
- 1861 - O'Hara finds payable gold in the Verterburn creek at Waipori on the 17th December.
- 1862 - Gabriel Read receives a further five hundred pounds on the 5th May in recognition of his first discovery.
- 1862 - In July the population of the Tuapeka Goldfields raised to 11,472 more than 20 times the current population of Lawrence.
- 1862 - In August the woolshed Diggings at Glenore Woolshed were included in extended goldfield boundaries.
- 1862 - In August it was reported that since the first gold discovery at Tuapeka Gold fields export duty had been paid on over 477,870 ounces of gold.
- 1862 - In the autumn of 1862 two men named Hartley and Reilly deposited 87 pounds weight of gold in the Dunedin Gold receivers office.
- 1863 - A prospector named Davies finds the largest nugget of all the Tuapeka goldfields at Waipori - a 700 gram nugget.
- 1866 - The first Chinese miners began to arrive at Tuapeka goldfield.
- 1868 - The Lawrence Chinese Camp is established because the Lawrence Town Council of the day declare the town "out of bounds" to Chinese immigrants.
- 1869 - First Joss House is built at the Lawrence Chinese Camp.
- 1870 - The Chinese Camp's first intermarriage (a European marrying a Chinese) takes place.
- 1877 - Goldfield proclaimed at Waikawa.
- 1884 - Chinese miners are given the right to buy their own land.
- 1891 - Lawrence Chinese Camp at its peak with 123 residents.
- 1893 - The first dredge to work the Glenore River flats begins operation.
- 1894 - Thomas Gabriel Read dies penniless on the 31st October.
- 1945 - The last Chinese miner, Chow Shim Lain, dies.
- 2004 - Remains and land of Lawrence Chinese Camp is purchased by Dr J Ng and the Department of Conservation. Lawrence Chinese Camp Charitable Trust established.
- 2011 - March 18-21, Lawrence celebrates the 150th anniversary of the discovery of payable gold by Gabriel Read on the 25th May 1861.