



COLOURED BY \_\_\_\_\_

AGE \_\_\_\_\_



**BLACKETT LIGHTHOUSE**  
HARBOUR LIGHT WITH SOCIAL HISTORY

**Colourful Facts**

You are welcome to print and share to celebrate Timaru. But artwork is not to be used for financial gain. Artwork By Roselyn Fauth © WuHooTimaru 2019

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FIND FREE FUN

John Blakett (1818-93) was appointed Marine Engineer by the NZ Government in 1870 and then Engineer-in-Chief of New Zealand in 1884.

He was part of a small number of marine engineers who established lighthouses across NZ in early settlement years.

The government opposed Timaru's new breakwater, due to the investment going into Lyttelton, Port Chalmers and the main railway line. The push and pull between locals and government ignited Timaru's pioneering spirit. So the Timaru locals funded the breakwater themselves. The port of Timaru and Tauranga are the only two independently owned major ports in the country.

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**24** Lighthouses across NZ were the responsibility of John Blakett (1818-93). His work with the Vogel administration was during a huge infrastructure boom. He also worked on railways.

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**14** Of these lighthouses were timber. Nine of the original buildings remain, four have been preserved as landmarks and five operational.

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**1878** Was when the kerosene light was first lit, just as work was about to begin on the first breakwater. It was the main harbour navigation light. It was replaced with gas in 1890 then an then electric light in 1920.

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**30 ft** Tall, the 3 story kauri tower was protected by a five ft dome that was originally painted a stone colour. It is a Category II structure and was restored by the NZ Historic Places Trust. The lighthouse was repainted white with a red dome by the Timaru District Council in 2011.

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**1** Captain Meredith was the first lighthouse-keeper, appointed by the Harbour Board at a salary of 50 guineas per annum.

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**1970** Was when the lighthouse was decommissioned due to the new lights being erected on Dashing Rocks.

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**2010** It was moved to it's current location looking over Caroline Bay on the cliffs named after the ship that was wrecked and still lies below, The Ben Venue. It was originally erected at No. 7, Le Cren's Terrace (renamed The Terrace) then to corner of Te Weka Street and Benvenue Ave.

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**Did you know?** Locals originally wanted a concrete light house at Patiti Point, but the government only offered a wooden lighthouse. As the towns ammunition supply was stored at Patiti Point, it was decided a wooden lighthouse with a kerosene lit lamp was safer further up the coastline.

## Full of controversy

Who would have thought a lighthouse engineer could be so controversial. Timaru's Blakett lighthouse reminds us that shipping and coastal transport had a positive impact on our social and economic development, but the new port came at a cost.

Timaru was gaining a reputation as a ship graveyard, and some of the locals knew that to stay on the colonial highway of the sea, they needed to offer safer mooring.

The Timaru Harbour Board formed 1877 and a year later the first 300ft of solid mole construction began. Prince Rupert was the first ketch to be unloaded on the new breakwater in 1879. The completion of the artificial harbour could now provide ships with safer mooring and enabled the port to expand. Great for all of the new farms in the district gearing up to export wool, grain and meat.

Blakett reported on the progress in 1880 and opposed the new Port. He could see the changes to the long shore drift and coastal erosion. He recommended the breakwater be blown up immediately. Some of the locals were outraged and protested by parading an effigy of him down the main street to the end of the breakwater, stuffing it with fireworks and blowing it up.

Timaru's Port provided a huge boost to the economy. It also resulted in the formation of Timaru's iconic Caroline Bay beach by re-directing the flow of sand into what was previously an open bay with stoney beach.

However, as Blakett predicted, the port development interrupted the flow of gravel along the coast resulting in a rapid increase in erosion to the north of Timaru. This had many negative impacts on land and the environment particularly on biodiversity and on the once plentiful mahinga kai areas used by Māori.

## WuHoo Challenge

Colour in the colouring in sheet

Knock on the red light house door and see if anyone answers? How many windows are there?

Find the original lenticular lens on display at the South Canterbury Museum

Download the Timaru Trails app to learn more about the history of the area.

**LEARN MORE:** The South Canterbury Museum

source - <https://sites.rootsweb.com/~nzlscant/lighthouse>

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