

Baldwin Street



Who's who

William Baldwin (1838-1917) was born in Ireland. He emigrated to New Zealand in 1860, initially farming at Teviot and subsequently as Goldfields Commissioner at Waitahuna. In 1863 he was elected to the Otago Provincial Government. He established the *Otago Guardian* newspaper in 1873.



Digging deeper...

Buchanan Street, which runs between the top of Baldwin Street and nearby Calder Street was named after William Baldwin's father-in-law, Andrew Buchanan, a Dunedin doctor and politician.

Yes it is, no it isn't, yes it is... After bouts of controversy, Baldwin Street is still 'The Steepest Street in the World'. Well, part of it definitely is anyway.

For one 6m stretch, Baldwin Street has a world-beating gradient of 1:2.86. That is, for every 2.86m the street goes forward horizontally, it rises a metre. When the slope of the remaining 353m of the street is added in, however, the overall average is only 1 in 5.19. Still, because of that 6m stretch, the prize is ours.

Running uphill from North Road to Buchanan Street, Baldwin Street was named after William Baldwin, who purchased a ten acre block in North East Valley in 1877 and had it surveyed into 132 residential sections. He named the steepest street in his subdivision after himself.

Two annual events bring even more publicity to Baldwin Street. In summer the 'Baldwin Street Gutbuster' tests the fitness and balance of about 1000 athletes who race each other for the fastest time up the street and back down. Every July, a charity fundraiser sees thousands of giant jaffas thundering down the street, each sweet numbered and sponsored by an individual.



Contestants in the Baldwin Street Gutbuster



Thousands of jaffas streaming down Baldwin Street

