

# St Clair



## What's what

The Noah's Ark Tearooms and the adjoining park at St Kilda are popular spots for local families. The park includes a dinosaur slide, a boot shaped slide, and a whale paddling pool with a big open mouth children can walk into. The tearooms are built in the shape of the biblical ark with two giraffes poking out.



## Who's who

Joey the sea lion arrived at St Clair in 1935, and soon became a local icon. He was a very mischievous character who developed a taste for Lanes Purity Lemonade; he even featured in the company's advertising! The story goes that Joey would catch the tram that ran at the time to go fishing in the harbour, visit the local shops, and also managed to lock himself in a phone booth.



## My two cents

'I have the freedom to choose between a number of glorious beaches all within a half-hour, many just a bus ride away. I can surf, or swim, or sail, or kayak – or just relax and soak up the rays.'

- Rebecca Everdon



## Local lingo

'John Willie' refers to John Wilson Memorial Drive, a scenic drive along the St Kilda beachfront to Lawyers Head. It was a popular drive for boy racers until work began on the Tahuna sewage outfall extension in 2006.

St Clair and St Kilda are undoubtedly Dunedin's most popular beaches. They are the most easily accessible sandy beaches close to the central city, luring many residents out during summer days as well as during spectacular storms. The beaches have a long history with settlers, both Māori and European, as well as being a popular spot for coastal wildlife.

Since 1883 when the Caversham Borough first undertook stabilisation work at St Clair, there has been some form of wall or esplanade in place. Several times sea walls have been undermined or breached, and erosion by wave action is still problematic for the Esplanade, in spite of the \$4.8 million upgrade completed in 2003. The Esplanade itself found popularity in the 19th century with visitors who would promenade or picnic – sunbathing and swimming were deemed inappropriate activities at the time. As a result, businesses such as ice cream parlours and tearooms became established in the area. In more recent times, swimming, surfing, body boarding, and sunbathing have become popular pastimes, and a resurgence of cafés and restaurants has drawn increasing numbers to the area.

Surfing was introduced to New Zealand in the 1960s and caught on quickly with the locals. St Clair Beach is recognised as one of New Zealand's finest surfing spots within close proximity to a populated area. It comes as no surprise that one of New Zealand's oldest surf clubs is located at St Clair Beach. There are regular competitions held as a result of the consistently good surf, including night surfing competitions. St Clair is also home to a surf lifesaving club that was formed in 1911. The iconic shark bell hanging at the Esplanade was gifted to the lifesaving club by the Dunedin City Council in the 1920s to warn swimmers and surfers of any approaching danger. It is still in use today.



Sunbathing has long been a popular activity at the Esplanade



The St Clair lifesaving club shark warning bell

