

ASHLEY GORGE RESERVE

Nestled in a valley at the base of Mount Thomas forest just 8 kms from Oxford is one of Canterbury's best kept treasures. Set amidst this beautiful bush and wondrous woodland is the Ashley Gorge Reserve.

"Located as the Domain is in a bend of the river, shut off from public view, its restfulness, its freedom from distraction, its absence of artificiality, its beech grove, its gently flowing water, its slaty rocks, its smooth beach, and its bush clad hills all combine to make it a resort of exceptional attraction, and an ideal resting and recreation place" wrote Lancelot Watson in his book 'The Story of Oxford 1852-1932'.

Good Climate

Christchurch may have grey skies but here at Ashley Gorge we have our own unique climate. Tucked away in a sheltered valley we miss many of the winds and temperatures can soar. There are many perfect shady spots to be found around the reserve and campground with the beautiful old trees about. Bring along the sunscreen, sunglasses and sunhats.

Fantastic River

The Ashley River, here just below the Gorge, is a great river that offers adventure, fishing, kayaking and swimming. Its soothing sound and wide riverbed provide scenic areas to explore. Who can delay making a splash in the water with a simple stones throw?

The popular "What Now TV" show has recently filmed an 8-part River Challenge here, with host Charlie giving lots of river safety information for the programme.

Kids of all ages enjoy river play and can spend hours splashing about as over half of the riverbed is shallows. Dads are wonderful at constructing dams and small pools for the kids. For the swimmers and the soakers there are great safe swimming holes. You can walk along the river and find your own secluded swimming spot to enjoy! Make use of that old tyre tube and float away your cares!

Picnic Pleasure

The Reserve covers 13 acres of area where you can enjoy a picnic. Bring your gas barbeques and the family to enjoy the tranquil setting. Picnic tables can be located throughout the reserve with toilets close by. The reserve is well supported by the local Waimakariri District Council, which has recently provided a new playground, toilet block and sewerage system.

Despite leaving a trail of banana skins, Camilla and Tamati hosts from "What Now TV", lost their direction in the bush. Luckily they had supplies and knew what to do, until they were quickly found by local search & rescue dog Tess.

Enjoy the native beech forest. At first it looks like there's been a fire but that's the honey dew that the area is well known for - you can smell and taste it. Listen out for the amazing NZ wood pigeons then watch their crazy antics as they eccentrically fly about. A large bird balancing on the tiniest of branches in the trees is something to be seen!

Camping Ground

Camping with the family is a tremendous and memorable adventure for all to enjoy. It's the times when great memories are made. It can be during the long summer holidays or on special short breaks. And Ashley Gorge Holiday Park provides the perfect base for a holiday in the North Canterbury region whether you want adventure or some peace and quiet.

It's even known for the neighbours and the camp managers to camp here.

The holiday park contains tent sites, power sites, bunkhouses and cabins, as well as a large communal kitchen and dining area, wonderful bright ablutions and a laundry. It's so spacious - There's 12 acres of camping area, beside 13 acres of picnic area. Blissful is how it feels having so much room and so many attractive trees about.

If you're new to camping then it offers a place not far from Christchurch but with good facilities so you can come and test out your new adventure in a friendly and safe environment!

During the day you can sit back, relax and listen to the birdsong, or enjoy some local activities. A relaxing bonus for all the parents is the Camp Kids summer holiday programme which runs daily 10am till noon. The water slide and fun challenges like egg & spoon, sack and 3-legged races are some of the most popular of the organised activities.

Necessities

The Ashley Gorge Shop provides all your daily requirements. You can even enjoy a good coffee. Fantastic hot chips are popular to satisfy that hunger after a swim in the river. And who can resist a cooling ice cream on the ideal summer's day?

"This beautiful spot, rich with memories of days gone by, is still a resort of exceptional attraction, and an ideal resting and recreation place" says Heather Norton, manager at Ashley Gorge Holiday Park and Picnic Reserve.