

PAPAROA LIONS BUSHWALK



Welcome

Nau mai, haere mai ki te rohe o Te Uri-o-Hau, ki tēnei pā o ō mātou tūpuna ki a Heremata e tū nei. E wātea ana koutou ki te hīkoikoi i te whenua nei, kotahi te tono a Te Uri-o-Hau, kia mau ki te whakaaro whakaute, kaua hoki e tango aha rānei i te wāhi nei.

Welcome to the lands of Te Uri-o-Hau, to this pā of our ancestors called Heremata. You are free to walk through this pā, we ask that you respect this place and that nothing is taken.

Ko Tokatoka te maunga
Ko Arapaoa te awa
Ko Kaipara te moana
Ko Māhuhu-ki-te-rangi te waka
Ko Te Uri-o-Hau te hapū
Ko Ngāti Whātua te iwi

Ko te reo mihi tēnei o Te Uri-o-Hau ki a koutou katoa. E whai ake nei ko ngā kōrero mō tēnei pā o ī mātou tūpuna ki a Heremata.

Te Uri-o-Hau acknowledges you all. Following are kōrero for the pā Heremata, a pā of our Te Uri-o-Hau ancestors.

Te Uri-o-Hau are the descendants of Hakiputatōmuri, they take their name from his father Haumoewārangi. Te Uri-o-Hau come from the ancestral waka Māhuhu-ki-te-rangi and descend from the old tribes of Kaipara such as Te Tini-o-Kūī, Te Tini-o-Toi, Ngāti Rangi, Ngāi Tamatea, Ngāti Tāhuhu, Ngāti Tahinga, and Ngāti Kura.

Te Uri-o-Hau are a part of the Ngāti Whātua confederation of autonomous tribes.

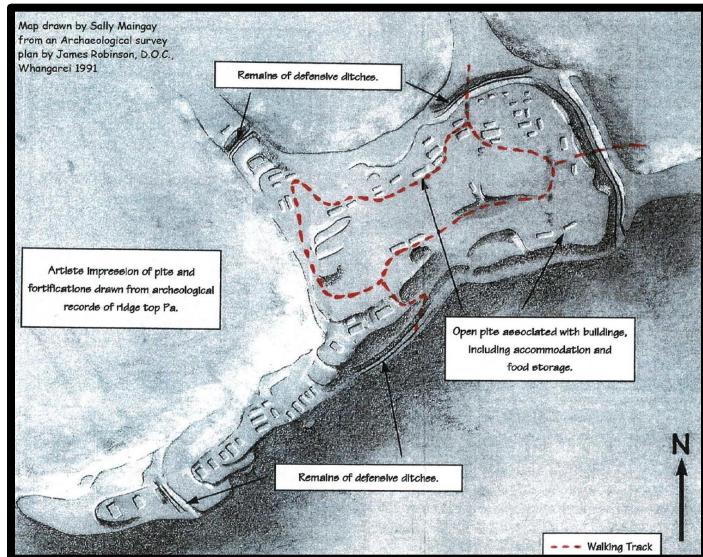
Historical Narrative

In 1807 the combined tribes of Kaipara defeated Hongi Hika at Moremunui (on the west coast north of Dargaville); the battle is known as Te Kai a te Karoro or Te Haenga o te One. However, in the 1820's Hongi Hika returned with muskets and in 1825 defeated Ngāti Whātua near Kaiwaka. The tribes then fled to the north and some to the south to stay with kin. (There is reference to this in the Kaiwaka 150th Jubilee Book).

In the 1830's, Ngāti Whātua began moving back. In 1858, Te Uri-o-Hau sold 15,021 acres (known as the Paparoa Block) to the Government. The Paparoa Lions Bushwalk is part of that acreage. The Walkway comprises a pā called 'Heremata'. It is believed that the actual forming of pā in this area was carried out by Ngāti Awa in their early occupation of the Kaipara.

Heremata Pā

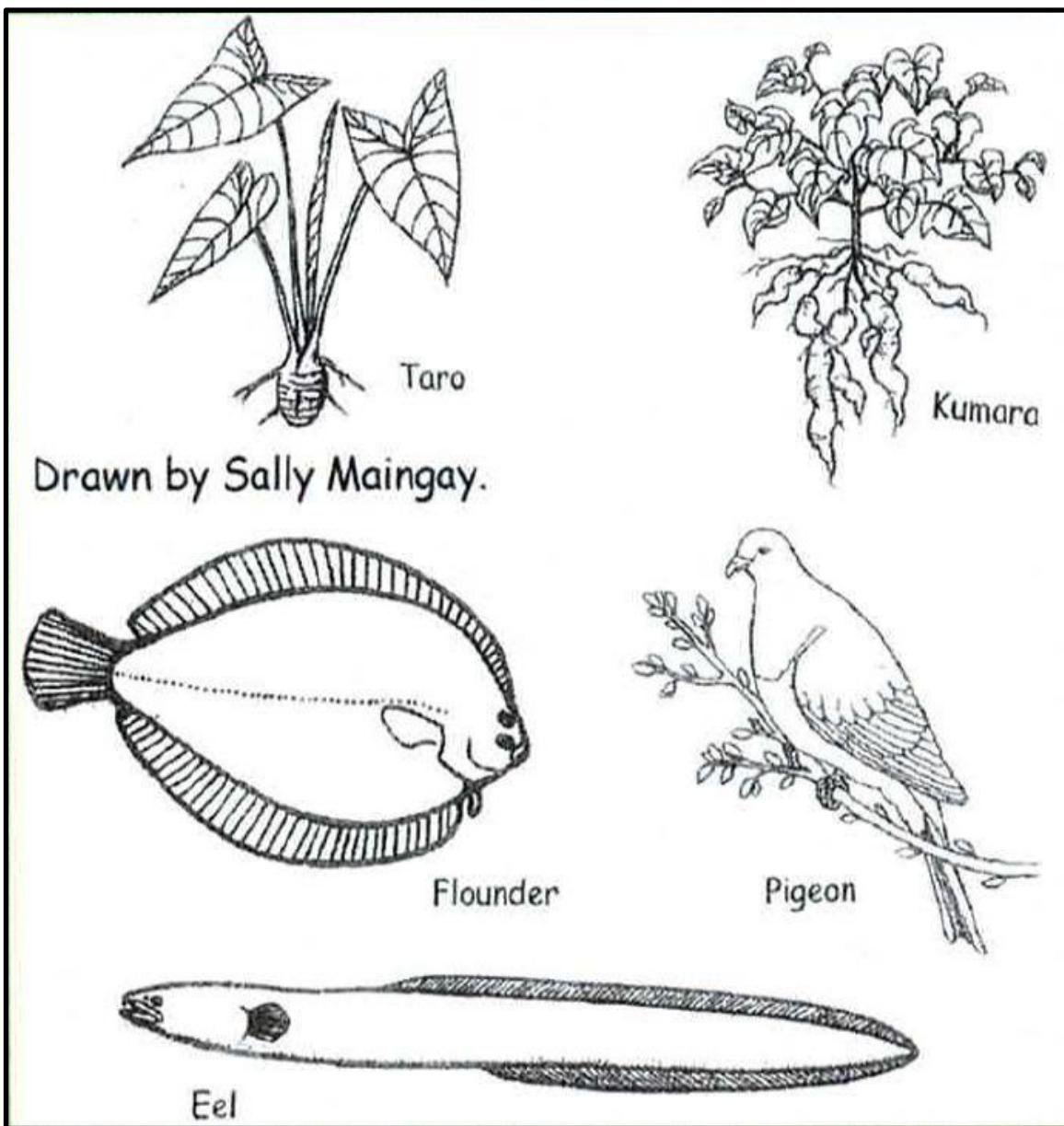
What we know about Heremata Pā. The steep hill slopes of this well-preserved archaeological site provide natural defenses. The ditch and bank fortifications across each of the spurs that run down from the flat summit gave extra protection.



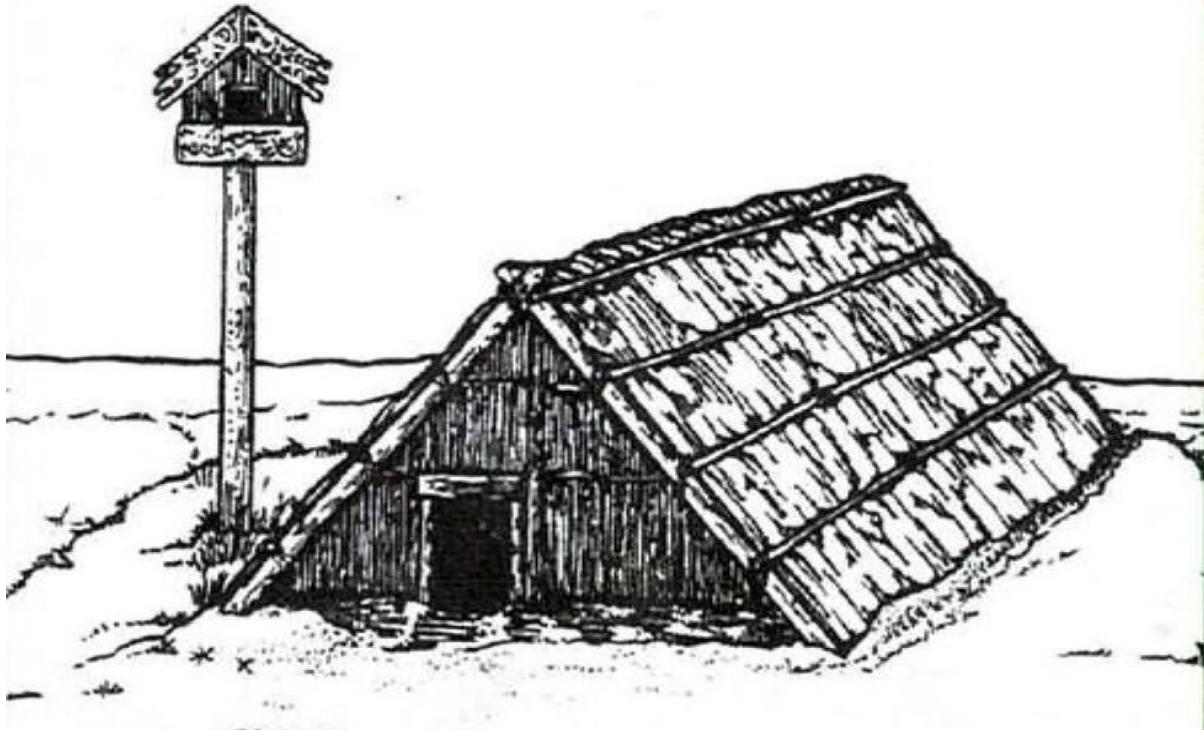
Living terraces and storage pits cover an area of approximately 400 square metres at the hilltop and continue along two of the spurs. This suggests that more than 300 people could have found refuge here during the threat of warfare, although in times of peace many would have lived in dispersed hamlets below the pā.

When the pā was surveyed in the mid 1990's, middens (rubbish disposal) were found containing oyster and cockle shells which tell us about what the primary food source was eaten when the pā was inhabited.

Other foods likely to have been stored and eaten include kumara, taro, eel, flounder and other fish and a variety of native birds.



An outstanding feature of the site is the number of clearly defined storage pits. The presence of at least 60 pits indicates that large gardens were situated nearby producing kumara, taro, yams and gourds. This fortification served to protect both people and their food stores. The structures had thatched roofs (see below) and were used to keep special foods away from kiore, the Polynesian rat.



Drawn by Sally Maingay.

The pā's location close to the headwaters of the Kaipara would have provided easy access to the rich seafood resources of the harbour.

It would appear that the Pā was abandoned at least 300 years ago (as of 2024). However further research is needed to establish this.

Current history of the Paparoa Lions Bushwalk

In 1989, the area of bush across the river from Paparoa was covenanted with the Queen Elizabeth II National Trust. This was due to the passion and generosity of landowners Tom and Kathy Pow and Clyde and Glenys Roach.



The two families saw an opportunity to form a walkway from Paparoa Village and as Clyde Roach was a member of the Paparoa Lions, the Club was quick to take up the project of building and maintaining the walkway.

Apart from forming the track and building steps, a major hurdle was how to cross the river at the 'Village Green' and the creek which divides the two covenants. With expertise within the Club, two bridges were built. Roger Martin (who owns the dairy farm in Paparoa) generously donated two large steel stringers, Northpower drilled the large foundation holes and an engineer designed the main bridge. Many hours of work were given by local contractors, community and Paparoa Lions Club members

Soon after completion, it was discovered that the main bridge was too low and with many more hours of work from the community, the bridge was raised above flood level.

In 1990-91, much research was carried out in the early years of the project along with Club members Doug Domett and Max Wilson. With help from the Department of Conservation, archaeologists and historians; many hours of work were put in to try and unravel the history of the pā site and map it. We should make special acknowledgement of James Robinson and Simon Best, the late Joan Maingay and Nan Worthington who were at the centre of this research.

Later in 2007, Lisa Forrester, Northland Regional Council Biodiversity specialist, identified some of the flora.

In 2009, the Progressive Paparoa Inc. group saw the opportunity to extend the track from the top of the hill at the pā out to Pahi Road. This was achieved with funding from the Government, and volunteer work from the community in 2010. This has given walkers the option of completing a loop from Paparoa, a total of approximately 5kms.

Conservation & Restoration

From about 1994, apart from building and maintaining the walkway, Paparoa Lions have also made a substantial effort to help protect, maintain and, in fact, increase the wildlife, some of which are endangered. We have eradicated goats, trapped and poisoned possums, mustelids and rats. As a result, there are more birds to be seen and heard and the understorey of the bush continues to thicken and grow.

The ecology of the walkway with its saltmarsh, supporting a backdrop of native bush and the fauna that goes with it, is hard to find anywhere else. As a result of this, the Enviroschools programme taught in the local surrounding schools use the walkway as a hands-on learning experience.

The mitigation of Kauri die-back disease is another problem which the Lions Club has taken on with help from the Department of Conservation and the Northland Regional Council in 2006.

Kauri die-back is a fungus-like disease specific to Kauri and kills trees of all ages. It is spread mainly through the movement of soil, i.e. footwear etc. Microscopic spores in the soil can infect Kauri and damage the tissues that carry nutrients within the tree. Nearly all infected trees eventually die. Two Footwear Sanitising stations have been installed which use a strong disinfectant to reduce the spread of the fungus. Keeping walkers' footwear out of the soil forms a major part of the mitigation process.

In 2018, the Lions Club got a boost for the project from a successful application for a grant from Kaipara District Council. This allowed us to contract a Department of Conservation approved builder to build 100m of boardwalk over a high density of Kauri roots near the Pahi end of the track; with help from the community and Club members keeping the cost within budget.

We were further fortunate in 2021 to receive help from the Northland Regional Council who funded several hundred thousand dollars courtesy of the Provincial Growth Fund from the Government. As of November 2022, this has allowed Regional Council contractors to complete all the remaining needed protection of both the ecology and archaeology of the walkway. It has also allowed for the replacement of the bridge across the creek between the two Covenants which was not up to present-day standards and requirements.

In 2021, 5,000 trees and plants, donated by Kauri Park Nurseries, were planted by Lions and community volunteers; the Enviroschools children also participated in this planting project. The Lions Club members have also set aside an area for planting native trees in memory of members who pass on after long service to their community.

Thanks

The Paparoa Lions Bushwalk track is a tribute to many people who have given of their time and expertise. The walkway has become a 'must see' attraction in Paparoa and is a real legacy to those Lions who had the foresight and volunteered their time to create such an asset. Along with Progressive Paparoa Inc., the Lions Club is proud and dedicated to its ongoing improvement, maintenance and pest control. We are grateful to Northland Regional Council and the Department of Conservation for the ongoing supplies needed for Footwear Sanitising stations and pest control.

Because of the undisturbed natural ecology and archaeology this must be among the best short walks of New Zealand. The pā has remained undisturbed for centuries and is protected by the bush canopy and also now a substantial boardwalk, steps etc. It is Paparoa's ecological wilderness.