**Discover Otuataua Stonefields Historic Reserve**

An internationally significant heritage landscape and an important natural, archaeological and historic area. For Te Wai-o-Hua, tangata whenua (indigenous people of the land), it is a taonga (treasure), and for the people of Auckland and for all New Zealanders alike it is an important historic place.

This 100 hectare area has been established to protect and preserve the archaeological remains of communities which thrived on this land for hundreds of years. It is one of the best volcanic areas of Tamaki-makau-rau (Auckland) where you can see the large scale stonework and earthwork remains that show how people once lived and worked. The reserve is waahi tāpu (a sacred place) to descendants of Te Wai-o-Hua and Waikato iwi of the Tainui waka (canoe).

Please be respectful while visiting. Tangata whenua have especially requested that food is not consumed on the reserve (water bottles are welcome) and that visitors refrain from walking on the top of Puketapapa volcano, a site of particular traditional significance (follow the walk marker posts around the northern side).

**Geology**

Two of Auckland’s smaller volcanic cones dominate the landscape and geology of the reserve. They are Otuataua and Puketapapa (also known as Puketi). Another volcano, Mangataketake, or Elliet’s Mountain, was located 2 kilometres to the southwest of the reserve. However, this cone has been completely quarried away for scoria. All three volcanoes erupted about 20,000 years ago and today scoria rock and lava bombs from these eruptions are still evident throughout the reserve.

The name ‘Otuataua’ has been used for this historic reserve because it is the most dominant landscape feature and a significant historic place.

**History**

The Otuataua Stonefields and the surrounding areas have been occupied and cultivated since the earliest days of settlement in the region. A recent carbon age estimate for shell midden from an archaeological site on nearby Puketukutuku Island dates to the 12th century; this is currently one of the earliest dates for human occupation in Aotearoa (New Zealand).

According to traditions and history Ngā-Ohio people were the earliest inhabitants of this area. Te Wai-o-Hua iwi (tribe), the descendants of these people, controlled the Tamaki otiwhu during the 16th and 17th centuries, being briefly displaced by the northern tribe Ngā Puhuri during the early 1800s musket wars.

The first Europeans settled in the mid-1840s and established the Wesleyan (Methodist) Mission at Ihumatao on the shores of the Manukau Harbour; this site is located by the now quarried remnants of the Maungataketake volcanic cone, to the south of the Otuataua Stonefields.

From the late-1840s onwards European Farmers settled and introduced Scottish and English land management practices with their sheep and cattle. They started to clear scoria rock and build the many dry stone boundary walls to contain their stock.

In 1863, prior to the outbreak of the Waikato land wars, the first Māori King Te Wherewhéro lived here. Today, descendants of Te Wai-o-Hua live at Ihumatao Papi kāinga (village) being the location of Makaaurau Marae, the longest continuously occupied Māori settlement in the Auckland region. In the 1920s and 1930s there were also a number of holiday baches built on the shores of the stonefields and used by many Auckland families. At this time the Manukau Harbour was a popular holiday destination, with good fishing and swimming. Unfortunately these activities finished with the construction of the Mangere Wastewater Treatment plant in 1960. The recent decommissioning of this treatment plant by Watercare Services Ltd has once again opened the stonefields coastline to the harbour.

Today, archaeological evidence of early Māori occupation is clearly evident within the reserve. Numerous stonework and earthwork structures were built across the rocky landscape. Whare (houses) were built on the earth and rock and introduced Scottish and English land management practices with their sheep and cattle. They started to clear scoria rock and build the many dry stone boundary walls to contain their stock.

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Refer to the Otuataua Stonefields Commemorative brochure for information on walks and points of interest.

**Commemorative brochure references**

**Geology walk:** pp 10–11, #1–10
- 1. Otuataua cone
- 2. Puketaapa cone
- 3. Lava flows
- 4. Geology and land use
- 5. Lava caves
- 6. European farming
- 7. Micro-environments

**Botany walk:** pp 8–9, #1–4
- 1. Native vegetation 1
- 2. Vistas
- 3. Gardening and farming
- 4. Native vegetation 2

**History walk:** pp 6–7, #1–10
- 1. Otuataua pa
- 2. Mound garden
- 3. European dry stone walls
- 4. Maori whare/house site
- 5. Gardens
- 6. Early European barberry hedge
- 7. Lookout
- 8. Midden site (shell and stone)
- 9. Storage pits
- 10. European bach site

The numbers represent the different marker posts that you will see on each walk.