

Otuataua Stonefields Historic Reserve

Find out more: phone 09 301 0101
or visit www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz



Reserve bylaws

Dogs are allowed under control on a leash in the reserve, please be considerate of others including farm animals. Motorbikes are prohibited from the reserve at all times.

It is an offence to remove or disturb any vegetation or rocks within the reserve. Please respect this very special historic place.



This brochure highlights the Otuataua Stonefields Historic Reserve, one of the many parks for you to enjoy in Auckland south. 56 Ihumatao Quarry Road, Mangere

For more information on the walkway and educational opportunities contact:

Auckland Council

Phone: 09 301 0101

Email: enquiry@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Website: www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz

Indigenous birdlife and other fauna

As there are only two small pockets of remnant native vegetation, today native birds are fairly scarce in the reserve. However, you may be fortunate to see or hear piwakawaka (fantail), tūi, kererū (New Zealand wood pigeon) and tauhou (silvereve). The coastline adjacent to the reserve is also home to a variety of sea bird species such as the South Island pied oyster catcher, godwits and knots.

Two species of native skink are also present within the reserve, the copper skink and ornate skink. Please be mindful of these precious and vulnerable creatures while walking.

Reserve access and walkways

The main reserve entrance and car parking area is located at the end of Ihumatao Quarry Road, Ihumatao, Mangere. Coming from the Auckland Airport – along State Highway 20A – take a left turn at Ihumatao Road, a right at Oruarangi Road, and then a left at Ihumatao Quarry Road.

The reserve is managed by Auckland Council as a farm park. Walking access is provided through gates (leave closed gates closed), and although the main trails are marked, the reserve is open and there are great links with the Manukau Harbour coastal walkway and Te Araroa walkway.

There are three self-guided walks you can take each with a focus on geology, botany and history (use the inside map to navigate). All three walks start at the 'welcome map' located on the stone plinth by the second gate 150 metres from the main entrance. Each walk takes up to an hour to complete, but you can also walk all three in approximately two and a half hours. To help you find your way, each walk has wood marker posts and coloured markers along the trail (geology – blue, botany- green and history – white).

Note: there are no toilets on the reserve.

The nearest toilets are located on Oruarangi Road at the Oruarangi Creek mouth about 1 kilometre north of the main entrance gate.

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 Tāmaki-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 Puketaapapa 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 Puketaapapa (also known as Pukeiti). Another volcano, Mangataketake, or Ellett'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 Puketutu 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 Nga-Oho people were the earliest inhabitants of this area. Te Wai-o-Hua iwi (tribe), the descendants of these people, controlled the Tāmaki isthmus during the 16th and 17th centuries, being briefly displaced by the northern tribe Ngā Puhī 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 remnant of the Mangataketake 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 Wherowhero lived here. Today, descendants of Te Wai-o-Hua live at Ihumatao Papa kāinga (village) being the location of Makaurau 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 the treatment ponds 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 retained terraces and rua (food pits) were dug and covered over to store kumara (sweet potato). Most of the reserve was gardened. The European walls and old farmstead sites are also evidenced by exotic trees and plants. Please respect all these protected historic features when visiting.

Botany

Dense coastal broadleaf forest once covered the dry rocky volcanic landscape within the reserve. Today the Otuataua Stonefields contain some of the few remaining pockets of original native rock forest in the Auckland region. Some of the species you can see here include karaka, māwhai, porokaiwhiri, whau, titoki, pūiri, ngaio and various ferns. The reserve is also home to a rare and highly endangered plant called mawhai or the native cucumber. This plant has not been recorded growing elsewhere on the New Zealand mainland since 1866.





Key

- Reserve boundary
- Geology walk: G, G ...G¹⁰
- Botany walk: B¹, B² ...B¹⁵
- History walk: H¹, H² ...H²⁶
- Coastal walkway
- Fence – wire
- Wall – historic dry stone
- Gate(s) – farm and walk gates
- PI Interpretative plinths
- S Start – welcome map
- Walk marker posts
- P Parking

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

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

- 1–3 Otuataua cone
- 4–5 Puketaapapa
- 6 Lava flows
- 7 Geology and land use
- 8 Lava caves
- 9 European farming
- 10 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