



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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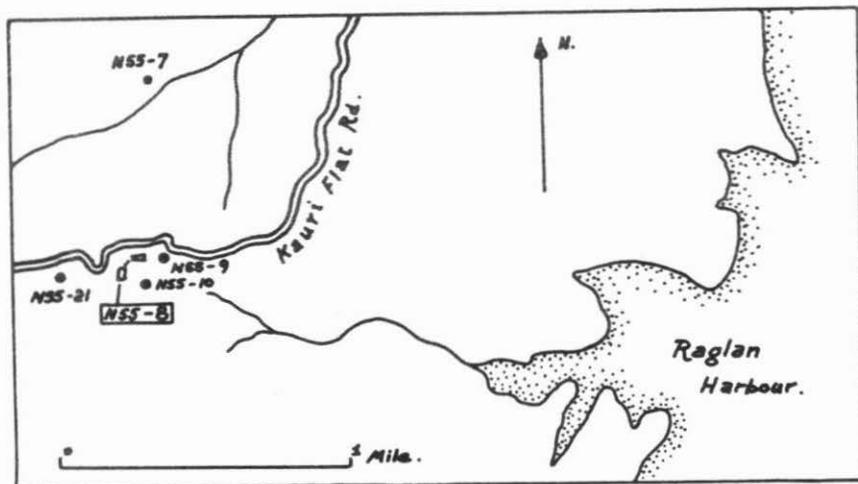
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#### ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE WAIKATO AREA

by  
Hans G. Pos.

During the winter of 1963 a field day was held regularly every month to record sites. It was decided to work in the Te Akau district, as a number of farmers with one or more sites on their farms were known to club members, it was also found after the first field day that members enjoyed the walks and scenery of the coastal farms. The farmers showed great interest and hospitality and went to much trouble pointing out sites on their own and neighbouring farms and driving parties in their landrovers to the more inaccessible places. During these visits there was ample opportunity to keep a look out for a site which offered good scope for further investigation during the summer months. Such a site was found on Kotare Hill. A start was made in the weekend of 20.10.1963, on a trip organised by the Adult Education Department in cooperation with the Waikato Archaeological Group. This weekend was highly successful. Lectures on site and artefact recording and map drawing were given by Roger Green and Miss Janet Davidson on the Saturday. The Sunday was spent on Kotare Hill with plane-table and measuring tape. After a discussion with Mr. Green it was decided to make this Pa the future excavation site for the Waikato Group.



- N 55-7 Burial Cave  
 N 55-8 Pa.  
 N 55-9 Pit complex.  
 N 55-10 Pit complex.  
 N 55-21 Earthworks -- "Banana Pa".

fig. 1.

Kotare Pa : N 55/8, Grid reference 399 508.

#### Location

Kotare Hill is situated on the North side of the Raglan Harbour. (fig. 1) It has extensive views over the surrounding rolling country and the harbour in the distance. The owner of the property is Mr. M.J. Tombleson who is very helpful and very interested in the excavations on his farm. The hill which was known to old settlers as Pa Hill is more like a L-shaped ridge (fig. 2). The highest point (525') carries a pipe trig. The Pa itself can be divided into two parts, both long and narrow, but each having its own defences. The site is mainly in grass, with some wing thistles, a few gorse bushes and some light scrub. Mr. Harold Wilson, son of one of the first settlers in the district, who was born only a short distance from Kotare Hill 85 years ago, recalls that in his early days the hill was surrounded by bush and the sides covered by scrub. Many pits were visible, but the Maoris had no history of the Pa having been occupied. There are also many other sites surrounding the hill, One with what looks like a ditch and a bank shaped like a banana (and therefore christened the Banana Pa) presents an enigma but future investigation will reveal whether this site is man made or one of Nature's tricks played to confuse archaeologists. Many pits can also be seen in the surrounding country.

## KOTARE N55/B

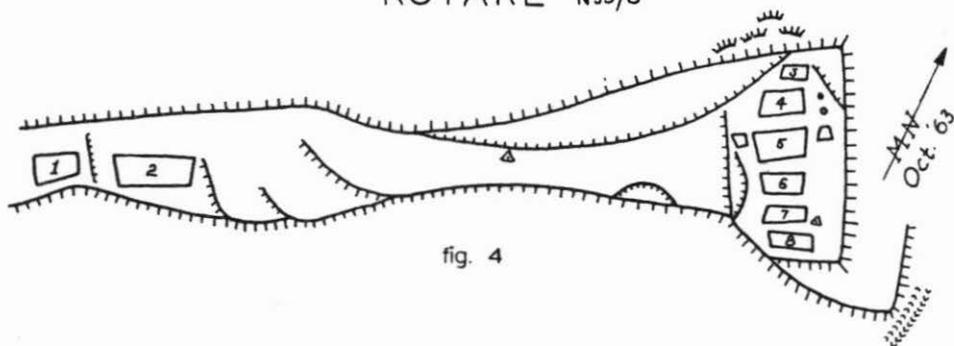


fig. 4

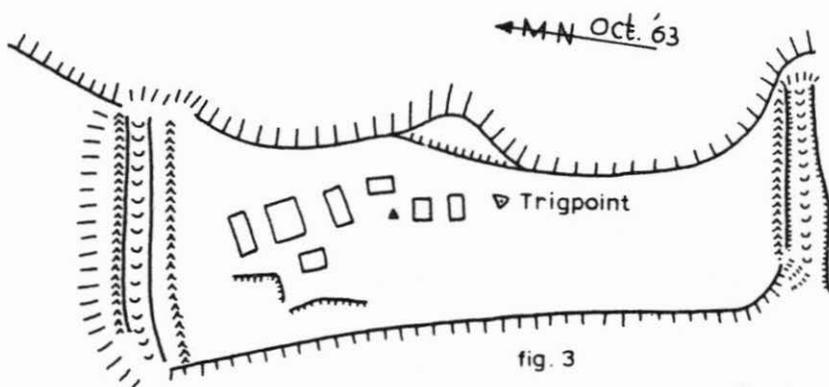


fig. 3

0 20 40 60 80 100  
feet

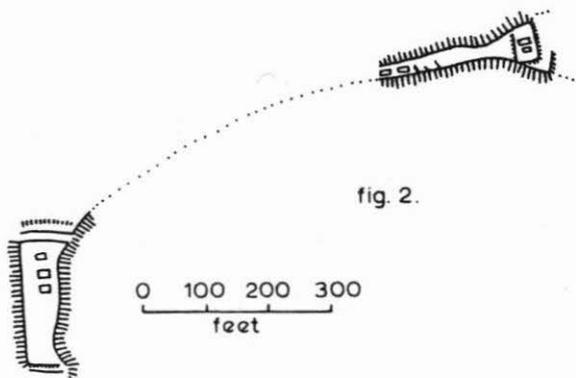


fig. 2.

0 100 200 300  
feet

### Description

The top part of the Pa (fig. 3) runs North-South and is defended on the North side by a bank, a ditch, and a bank, and on the South side by a ditch and a bank. On the East side the hill falls away steeply but on the West it has a gentle slope. Seven pits can be seen and are dug into what looks like very heavy clay. The lower Pa (fig. 4) runs East-West and is much better defended than the top. It has only one man-made defence, a bank and a ditch, approximately 100 feet to the West from the two big pits (1 and 2). The sides of this part are bare limestone and many post-holes can be seen in the rock. Hut sites are located on the east side and it looks as though the entrance to the Pa was situated here, as a kind of track has been carved through the limestone rock. No shell middens have yet been found on the Pa - which is surprising, as the distance from the harbour is not more than a mile.

### The Excavation

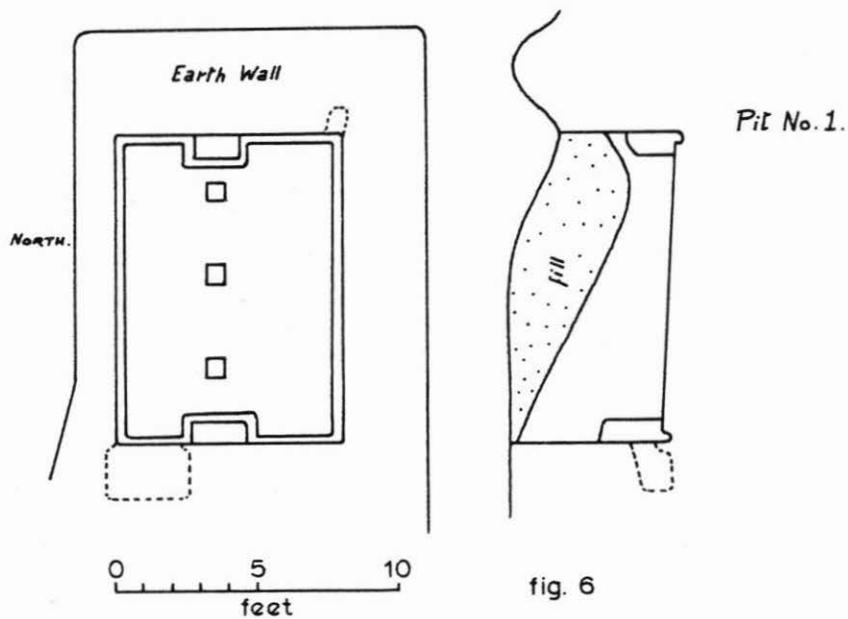
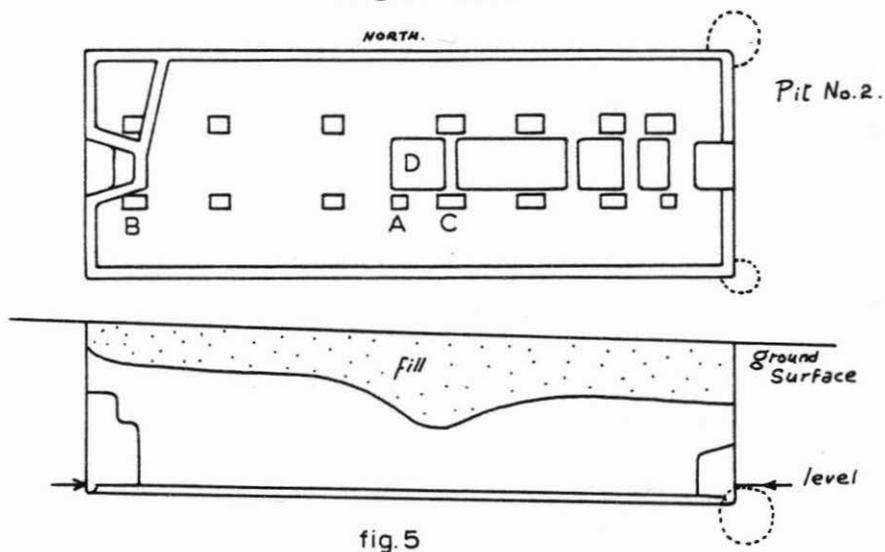
#### Pit 2:

The first excavation attempt on Kotara Pa was made in November 1963 and it was decided to start on Pit No. 2 (fig. 5). This pit showed up as a big depression with some gorse growing in and around it. After removing the turf it was soon discovered that the pit was cut into the sandstone and the fill had fallen in from the built up sides and had been brought in by cattle and sheep.

The pit is 22' 10" x 8' and is 5' 8" deep. It has a single buttress or step on the East side and two on the West. It has an elaborate drainage system, with a 5 inch fall to the two soak holes on the lowest part. The soak hole on the N.E. side is fairly big and can take a great volume of water. The drains are approximately 4 inches wide and deep, and were very easy to clean out as the root growth of gorse had not penetrated into the sandstone but had matted into the drains. Where the drain falls into the N.E. soak hole a small culvert had been dug through the sandstone. The great number of postholes inside the pit, present a puzzling feature. Most of them are of the same size, though one or two are slightly bigger. The range of depth is between 15 and 24 inches. Posthole A is only 6 inches deep. As no partner to it was found, it can be assumed that it was never used. Posthole B has a small step in it, but it may be that it was started slightly out of line. A very well preserved post butt of rectangular shape (22' long and 7½" x 3" thick) was dug out of C. It appears to be totara, but further examinations will have to be carried out.

The purpose of the four square pits in the floor is not known. A very little charcoal was found in D, but none was discovered in the others. It has been suggested that where pit 2 is situated, there was originally a natural depression across the ridge (see North profile). A similar kind of dip is found in the South profile, but that one is much deeper, extending into the floor (E) which was levelled with a hard clay. Another slight depression can be seen outside the pit on the slope. The makers of the pit might have used this natural dip to their advantage. In the North profile dip are a mass of tangled roots, which have not been able to penetrate into the sandstone. No artefacts or shells were found in the fill.

## KOTARE



Pit 1.

The second pit to be excavated by the Waikato Group was Pit 1 (fig. 6). This pit showed as a big depression in the ground, surrounded on three sides by an earth wall. This pit has also been dug out of the sandstone. It is of smaller dimensions being, 10'10" x 8' and 5'6" deep. There is a single buttress or step on both East and West sides. A small drain runs along the four walls, with a four inch fall into a small soak hole in the S.E. corner. The drainage system in this pit was not made to handle a great volume of water. It can be assumed that the roof probably overhung the surrounding earthwalls so that practically no water could enter into the pit. Only three square postholes were found, and these were dug slightly off centre.

The most interesting feature of this pit is the storage room in the N.W. corner. It had been dug out at floor level and a small wall had been left to protect the inside against water. There is no indication of its use. There is no evidence for a fire place, and no charcoal was found, nor were any artefacts found in the fill, which had accumulated over the years in this pit.

Conclusion

The excavation of Kotare Pa is a big undertaking for a small group, but in view of the work done so far, it appears that the plans of many interesting pits will find their way into the "Newsletter".

MAORI GUNFIGHTERS PA

by  
Alan Taylor.

Shortly before the Waikato War broke out, following General Cameron's crossing of the Mangatawhiri Stream on July 12th, 1863, a Government agent visited Ihumatao Pa and several other Maori settlements in the Mangere area. And the natives were asked to take an oath of allegiance to the Queen. But they refused; one chief (Tamati Ngapora) saying that 'they could not forget that they were part of Waikato' and so would have to 'go and die with their fathers and friends' (Gorst 1959:245). Which they did: many losing their lives either at Rangiriri or in the Hunua Ranges where they employed guerrilla tactics against British and Colonial troops (Sinclair 1959 : 136). Operating from large bush villages (Cowan 1933 : 55) the Mangere Maoris also built a number of small fortified positions close to the European lines of communication; one of which was recently discovered close to the Hunua Falls.

Situated about two miles from the falls (NZMS N48:592-342), the position is perfectly preserved and is a good example of a gunfighters pa; similar in form to those of Rangiriri and Orakau. (\*) Excavated on a bush covered spur (now a reserve) the fortification consists of a central redoubt and trenches (see sketch). In addition to the Pa, two outlying gun-pits were observed situated just above a freshwater creek, that flows round the base of the eastern slopes of the spur, averaging 3 feet in depth and 10 feet in width.

Finally, no artefactual material was recovered and only three small shell-middens, without associated "whare pits" or other evidence of occupation, were located close to a freshwater spring on the lower, western slopes of the site.

(Mr. W.A. Taylor prepared the line drawings illustrating this paper.)