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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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A HANGI SITE AT GLENBURN by K. Cairns.

Illus. Plate 4.

Map ref. Pahoa, N166 (313169)

Natural forces of winds and seas occasionally expose archaeological points of interest in a surprisingly exact manner. An example of this is to be found at Glenburn, where the sea has eaten away the land to expose an earth oven in perfect cross-section.

The umu, or hangi, is situated on the beach at Glenburn, some 35 miles from Masterton, on the Eastern coast. It is situated 10 yards from the high tide mark on a foreshore earth bank, which is 7' 6" high. Above the umu is a thick coating of topsoil and turf at the margin of a gently sloping paddock. The sea beating in on the coast at this point has gradually cut the earth bank back, and continuous action of this sort will destroy the site.

The umu appears to have had limited use, for the layer of charcoal is only 1" thick, and the layer of burnt stones, 9" thick is clearly defined in position. The highest part of the oven lies 10" below the grass topped bank, and the lowest part 20", making the oven 10" through. The visible length of the oven in the bank is 9' 3". The only shell visible in the oven is the paua (Haliotis iris)

PUTORINO by C. Scott-Maundrell.

Looking at a North Island map, about due south from Hunterville, can be seen a great bend in the Rangitikei River. Here the river hurls itself against high cliffs. It is said that in the early days of settlement in Lower Rangitikei a great landslide from these cliffs blocked the river for some days. When it burst the great volume of water scoured much of the bush from the banks, and started the huge shingle beds that are a feature of the lower river to-day.

The tongue of land that reaches into the bight is called Putorino. It was so named by the Maoris, who said that in certain winds the cliffs made music like that of the putorino, or wooden

flute. In the early days of the Pakeha settlement the lower flat, Mahoe, facing the cliffs, was farmed by the Maoris, sending wheat down by canoe to the flour mill at Bulls. The canoes used on the Rangitikei were lighter and of shallower draught than those used on many of the deeper rivers. Crawford and others journeyed up the Rangitikei. Colenso crossed the Maowhango on a log bridge, and forded the Rangitikei at Otara.

There is an old sketch map in the Archives Department showing the Rata-Putorino area, and on it are shown a Maori track leading north to Rata, roughly following the Main Trunk Line, and the main road, splitting near the Rata Dairy Company's store. One fork appears to follow the Porewa over the saddle to Mangaonoho. The other track seems to follow the Putorino road, and continues on the west bank of the river, until it joins the Porewa track at Mangaonoho. However, an easier and more probable route would be to continue down to the river crossing at the old ford, then passing through comparatively easy country until the Mangaonoho flat is reached. This theory is strengthened by the tradition of a pa on the bluff above the ford. The bluff has now been eroded away, and no trace of any pa remains, but, hypothetically allowing for the existence of this pa, the fact that a swamp lies to one side makes it reasonable for the old track, if it crossed here, to run closely under the side of the bluff. Also, in the fairly large flat area close by, is a large depression, apparently a metal pit, and it could have been for use in a cultivation adjoining the pa. There are still traces of former Maori occupation in this district, two ovens were uncovered in our garden, and others on a higher terrace, also on our adjoining property. All of these ovens were only at plough depth in heavy forest country on ridges drier than the surrounding country, also handy to suitable stones and water.

Space forbids further speculation on the path of this track shown on the map, or in fact whether it ever existed as a through track or was a local track leading to an eeling ground in the Rangitikei River, and the fine natural clearing.

There appears to be little evidence of any large population in the middle reaches of the Rangitikei River.
