



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



This document is made available by The New Zealand
Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

REVIEW

Lloyd Homer and Phil Moore, *Reading the Rocks. A Guide to Geological Features of the Wairarapa Coast*. Landscape Publications, Wellington. 1989. 64 pp. \$39.95.

Here is a new variety of guidebook to be welcomed by anyone with an eye for the landscape and a desire to comprehend its evolutionary processes. It results from the collaboration of Lloyd Homer, a long-established, award-winning landscape photographer with the New Zealand Geological Survey, DSIR, and Phil Moore, formerly with the New Zealand Geological Survey, who has an extensive geological knowledge of the East Coast - and an affection for the region.

Although not archaeological, the book enhances our appreciation of the setting of archaeological sites along the Wairarapa coast, for long one of the key areas in New Zealand archaeology and horticultural studies. The stories in the rocks belong as much to our history as the remains of human exploitation. Phil Moore, as a geologist with archaeological leanings, has made substantial contributions to the New Zealand Archaeological Association and our archaeological literature.

Reading the Rocks is a guide to the geological history of the Wairarapa Coast between Cape Turnagain and Turakirae Head, an area whose attractions are not widely appreciated. Sixteen of the more dramatic and telling features are focused on. The raised beach series at Turakirae Head, the pillar-style erosion of the Putangirua Pinnacles, and Castlepoint's imposing scenery are perhaps the best known.

The geological history of each area is described clearly; the periods of rock formation, erosion and destruction, and the fascinating clues to their interpretation. Excellent maps and diagrams help (I searched in vain for acknowledgement of the illustrator). There is a large panoramic or aerial photograph of each location plus smaller ones highlighting special features, processes of formation and significant fossils.

Technical terms have been kept to a minimum and should not be a problem for the non-geologist as there is a good glossary. For the ardent there is an excellent list of further reading. Directions to all locations are provided in the final section of text.

Reading the Rocks departs from the usual guidebook style by combining two functions; coffee table allure and usefulness in the field. The large format allows Lloyd Homer's spectacular photographs to be presented to maximum effect. The field guide function is covered by provision of the information and directions to all locations on six laminated cards in a pocket inside the back cover. The cards are designed to withstand the rigours of glove box and backpack travel, while the book can remain pristine at home.

In such an adaption of the coffee table/guidebook there is a danger that the new species will be neither one thing nor the other. There is no doubt that the glossy format is very seductive and that *Reading the Rocks* should have wider appeal as a result.

It is the first of a new series of geological guidebooks produced jointly by

New Zealand Geological Survey, DSIR and Landscape Publications. A prime motivation for establishing the series is to generate public interest in geological features which can, like archaeological sites, prove vulnerable to natural and human destruction and have a lower profile than threatened plants or animals.

This Wairarapa guide is an excellent example of geologists making available their specialist knowledge in an accessible and compelling form. I hope more scientists, including archaeologists, will follow this lead. I eagerly await the next Homer and Moore production.

Kathy Prickett