



Kauri Point Domain – then and now

A journey from the past through to the present



Toni-maree Rowe

ISBN: 978-0-473-73662-0 | February 2025

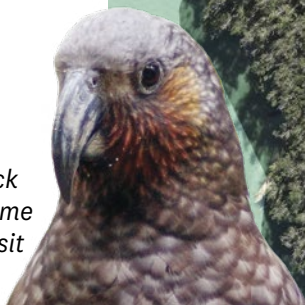
Introduction

Kauri Point Domain is tucked away on the western coastal edge of Birkenhead looking out on to the upper Waitemata Harbour.

It consists of an area of bush clad landscape typically found in this part of the North Shore, in addition to two small bays- Fitzpatrick Bay and Soldiers Bay.

The Domain is not to be confused with Kauri Point, found at the eastern end of Kendall Bay, which is a part of Kauri Point Centennial Park.

However, this was not always the case. Prior to 1935 the Domain also included Onetaunga Bay and much of the land that is now being used by the New Zealand Defence Force, but more of that later.



Cover: top photo of beach at Fitzpatrick Bay September 1902. Bottom photo same beach in 2024. Photo of a Kākā who visit in the late spring/early summer.

Contents

The Environment	5
Plants, Birds & Fish found in the Domain	6
The Past.....	8
The Arrival of the Europeans	11
The Present	16
The Future	19



Design by: Advent Marketing
Published by: Kaipātiki Community Facilities Trust
Copyright: TMRowe 2025
Toni-maree Rowe asserts the moral right to be identified as the author of this work. This work is copyright, all photos are also copyright Toni-maree Rowe unless otherwise stated.

KAURI POINT DOMAIN



SOLDIERS BAY

MURIEL FISHER RESERVE (CLOSED)

ENTRANCE

BALMAIN ROAD

SMALL BEACH SIDE TRACK

MAIN ROAD

Clay Bank

Steps

Shell Midden



Totara Patch

Garth's Gully

Bamboo Two

Cottage Garden Islands



Caretakers Cottage (Until 1939)

Bamboo One

MIDDLE TRACK

Broken Wattle Corner

Mud Patch

Upper Swamp Area

Pohutukawa Point



James Fitzpatrick's Brick Kiln

Rubbish Dump

Lower Grass Area

FITZPATRICK BAY



Shell Midden

BEACH TRACK



Shell Midden

SECURITY FENCE

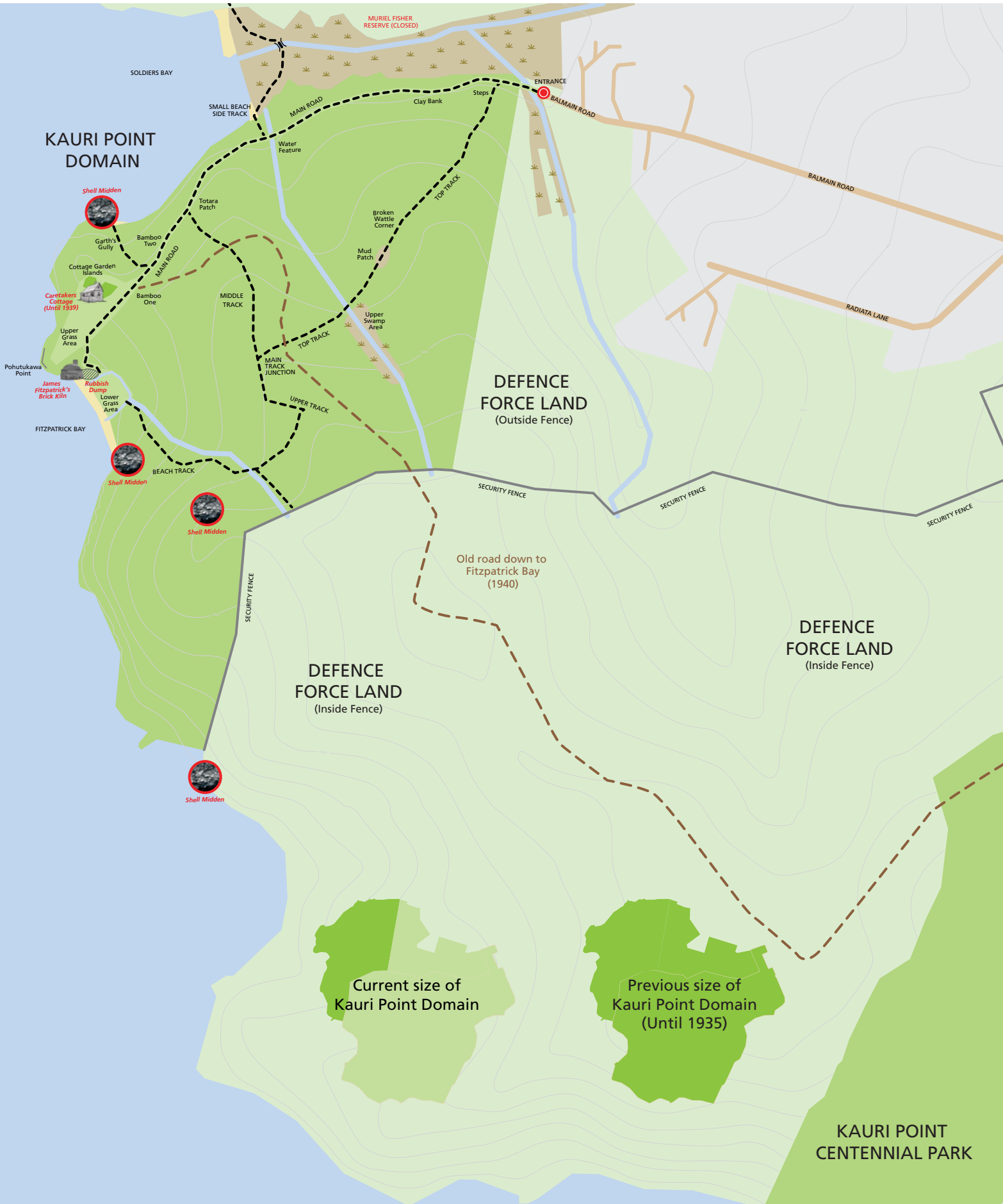
SECURITY FENCE

Old road down to Fitzpatrick Bay (1940)

DEFENCE FORCE LAND (Inside Fence)

DEFENCE FORCE LAND (Outside Fence)

Current Kauri Point Domain shown next to the Defence Force land



The Environment

Early European maps of the upper Waitemata Harbour refer to it as the Waitemata River reflecting its very earliest manifestation as a flooded Pleistocene river system. The natural rock type is sandstone and mudstone, both of which are highly susceptible to erosion, the steep sided cliffs that can be found all along this coastal stretch continue to crumble particularly after heavy rain.

The soils in the area are regarded as nutrient poor, providing a perfect environment for the growth of kauri but not so much for traditional horticulture and farming. Today the kauri, after which the Domain is named are all but gone (although I have been told that there are a handful of young kauri making a reappearance) and in their place invasive pine and wattle trees grow. Unfortunately, the pines often contribute to the erosion of the coast – when they fall down (and they often do) large chunks of the land go with them.

Two of the attractions of the Domain are the small beaches found at Fitzpatrick Bay and Soldiers Bay. Fitzpatrick Bay is the most used part of the Domain, with its sandy beach which at high tide can be a pleasant place to swim. There is a small grassy area surrounded by steep sided hills ideal for picnics. At Soldiers Bay a small creek flows into the sea, it is likely that this creek was once navigable for a short distance, but later development of the area has resulted in substantial silting up of the creek and the overall area of Soldiers Bay. The bay itself has significant tidal fall and at low tide consists of mudflats that extend as far as Island Bay to the west.

Soldiers Bay is one of the few remaining wetlands in the area with an important sequence of saltwater mangroves, salt marsh and brackish wetland. There is wide variety of plant life, as is evidenced by the list on page 6, and local volunteer groups, past and present, have endeavoured to encourage the diversity that can be seen today. Overall, the Domain is part of a much wider coastal forest which provides a safe haven for all manner of wildlife. Some of the bird species found regularly include tui, kererū, kotare, ruru and the threatened moho pererū (banded rail), along with kaka who visit in the late spring/early summer. In addition, whilst not strictly part of the Domain, there is an important native bat colony on the nearby defence force land.



Beach at Fitzpatrick Bay with fallen pine trees caused by Cyclone Gabrielle (2023).



Sandstone cliffs, always eroding.



Upper track walking through puna grove.



The wetlands behind Soldiers Bay with its ecologically important salt marsh.

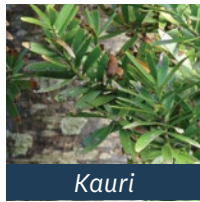
Leg bone of a Moa found at Fitzpatrick Bay. This bone came from a small species of moa which were common around the coastlines of Aotearoa.



Plants, Birds & Fish found in the Domain

Trees and Shrubs

- Kauri** - *Agathis australis*
Kahikatea - *Dacrycarpus dacrydioides*
Rimu - *Dacrydium cupressinum*
Tanekaha - *Phyllocladus trichomanoides*
Tōtara - *Podocarpus totara* var.
Miro - *Prumnopitys ferruginea*
Matai - *Prumnopitys taxifolia*
Cabbage tree - *Cordyline australis* tī kōuka
Nikau - *Rhopalostylis sapida*
Mānawa, mangrove - *Avicennia marina* subsp. *australasica*
Makomako, wineberry - *Aristotelia serrata*
Māmāngi - *Coprosma arborea* tree *coprosma*
Karamū, kāramuramu - *Coprosma robusta*
Coprosma spathulata subsp. *spathulata*
Karaka - *Corynocarpus laevigatus*
Akeake - *Dodonaea viscosa*
Kohekohe - *Dysoxylum spectabile*
Hangehange - *Geniostoma ligustrifolium* var. *ligustrifolium*
Porokaiwhiri; pigeonwood - *Hedycarya arborea*
Kanuka - *Kunzea robusta*
Mingimingi - *Leptecophylla juniperina* var. *juniperina* prickly
Mingimingi - *Leucopogon fasciculatus*
Wharangi - *Melicope ternata*
Māhoe - *Meliccytus ramiflorus* subsp. *ramiflorus*
Pōhutukawa - *Metrosideros excelsa*
Māpou, matipou, māpau - *Myrsine australis*
Black maire, maire rau nui - *Nestegis cunninghamii*
Akepiro, tanguru - *Olearia furfuracea*
Marsh ribbonwood mākaaka - *Plagianthus divaricatus*
Kawakawa - *Piper excelsum* subsp. *excelsum*
Haekaro - *Pittosporum umbellatum*
Horoeka, lancewood - *Pseudopanax crassifolius*
Pseudopanax crassifolius × *P. lessonii*
Houpara - *Pseudopanax lessonii*
Taurepo - *Rhabdothamnus solandri*
Kareao, pirita, supplejack - *Ripogonum scandens*
Tātārāmoa, bush lawyer - *Rubus cissoide*
Kōwhai - *Sophora tetraptera*
Toru toru - *Toronia*



Kauri



Kahikatea



Rimu



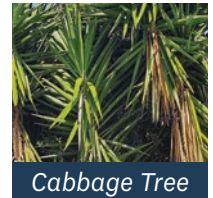
Tanekaha



Tōtara



Miro



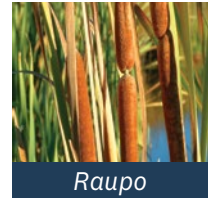
Cabbage Tree



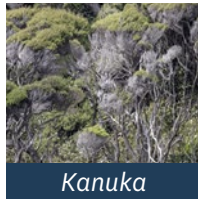
Nikau



Ponga



Raupo



Kanuka



Harakeke



Pohutukawa

Grasses and Sedges

- Toetoe** - *Austroderia*
Austrostipa stipoides
Oplismenus hirtellus subsp. *Imbecillis*
Pūrua grass, kukuraho - *Bolboschoenus fluviatilis*
Kamu matau a Maui, kamu - *Carex uncinata*
Wīwī - *Ficinia nodosa*
Tupari-maunga - *Gahnia xanthocarpa*
Sword sedge - *Lepidosperma laterale*
Wīwī - *Schoenus tendo*

Rushes

- Oioi** - *Apodasmia similis*
Wi, wīwī sea rush - *Juncus kraussii* var. *australiensis*
Raupo - *Bullrush*(*Typha orientalis*)

Mosses

- Mātukutuku** - *Lycopodiella cernua*

Ferns

- Huruhuru tapairu, maidenhair fern** - *Adiantum aethiopicum*
Huruhuru whenua - *Asplenium oblongifolium*
Ponga, silver fern - *Cyathea dealbata*
Pānako - *Icarus filiformis*
Kōwaowao, pāraharaha, hound's tongue fern - *Microsorium pustulatum*
Rārahu, bracken - *Pteridium esculentum*

Others

- Kakaha, pūwharawhara, wharawhara, kōwharawhara** - *Astelia banksii*
Tūrutu - *Dianella nigra*
Harakeke, flax - *Phormium tenax*
Raupō - *Typha orientalis*
Glasswort, beaded samphire - *Salicornia quinqueflora*
Australian fireweed - *Senecio bipinnatisectus*
Toatoa - *Haloragis erecta* subsp. *erecta*
Selliera, remuremu - *Goodenia radicans*
Sea primrose, shore pimpernel, water pimpernel - *Samolus repens* var. *repens*

Fiona Smal from Pest Free Kaipātiki kindly provided the above plant list.

Birds

In the Bush

Tui

Kererū - wood pigeon

Piwakawaka - fantail

Ruru - morepork or owl

Kākā - New Zealand parrot

Kāhu - swamp harrier

Tauhou - silveryeye or wax-eye

Pahirini - Chaffinch

On the Foreshore

Kotare – sacred kingfisher

Tōrea - oyster catcher

Matuku – white faced heron

In the Wetlands

Pukeko (australasian swamphen)

Moho pererū - banded rail

Quail – (introduced variety)

Others

Sparrows (common house)

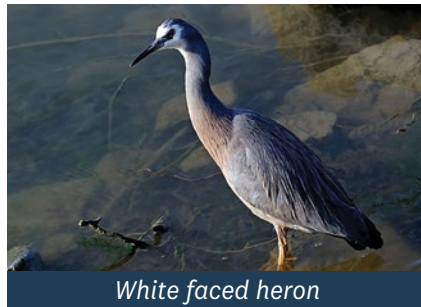
Gull – red beaked

Gull – black backed

Ring-necked doves – also known as collared doves

Blackbirds

Eastern rosellas (kāka uhi whero)



White faced heron

Courtesy: Bernard Spragg, NZ



Sacred Kingfisher

Courtesy: Dominic Sherony *



Oyster Catcher

Courtesy: Alan Vernon *



Ruru | Morepork

Courtesy: commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
User:Aviceda



Eastern Rosella

Courtesy: Shutterstock



Tui

Courtesy: Matt Binns *



Long-finned Eel

Courtesy: Shutterstock



Kererū

Courtesy: Shutterstock

Fish / Invertebrates

Ōrea - New Zealand longfin eel (*Anguilla dieffenbachii*)

Koura - freshwater crayfish

Kōkopu - freshwater fish of the genus *Galaxias*

Non-bird residents and visitors to Kauri Point Domain include the native New Zealand bat – pekapeka - and in the harbour the occasional orca and dolphin can be seen and very rarely a leopard seal may come ashore.



Original watercolour of a Banded Rail found in the Soldiers Bay wetlands. By Daisy Iles (age 8).

* This file is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

The Past

The human history of Kauri Point Domain (KPD) is tied intrinsically to the environment, how people in the past utilised the landscape of the area is very much part of its story. In Aotearoa New Zealand the first people to find their way up the harbour and into the area were the Māori. Our evidence for these early people can be found in the places they used, such as pā, gardens and middens. Unlike other parts of Tamaki Makaurau Auckland (and as mentioned previously) the soils here were not ideal for traditional forms of horticulture and there were no large volcanic cones on which to build the type of pā that are familiar to many Aucklanders. Pā in this part of the Waitemata Harbour tend to be promontory pā, situated on high headlands with good views of the harbour.

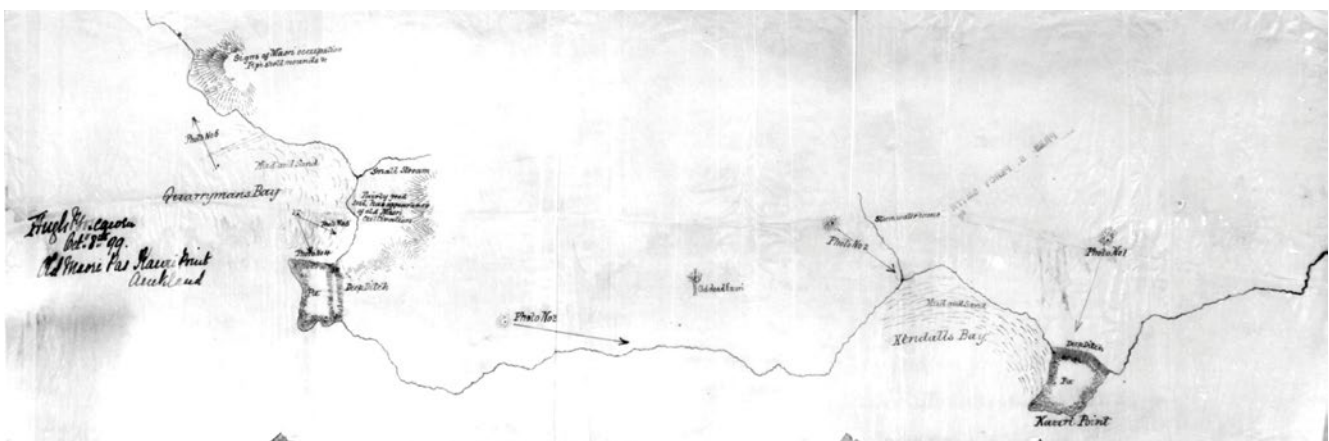
Although there are no pā listed on ArchSite (the New Zealand Archaeological Associations list of sites) in the immediate area of present day KPD, there are known promontory pā at nearby Kendall Bay (also confusingly referred to as Kauri Point), Island Bay and at Greenhithe (Tauhinu) overlooking Oruamo/Hellyers Creek. Kauri Point or Te Matarae A Mana is so named for Manaoterangi, a chief of the Ngati Kawerau who flourished in this area from around 1720-1790. It is also the only pā to have any archaeological excavations undertaken (in response to the possible threat of the construction of a second harbour crossing, the first having completely destroyed Onewa Pa on Stokes Point in Northcote). In the 1990 report of the excavation, Janet Davidson* emphasises the strategic importance of the headland describing the approach from the landward side as being along a narrow and winding ridge which widens to become a flat-topped headland. The site has natural defences in the form of a steep scarp to the southern side which is enhanced by

two incomplete ditches. The excavations and subsequent finds revealed that even given its impressive position the site was only used for a limited time.

Davidson concluded that the headland had been constructed by people who visited the adjacent bay for seasonal fishing and that most of the activities happened in the bay below. The pā therefore may have had a more esoteric function such as the proclamation of the Kawerau Chiefs' mana, an assertion of the group's rights to the area and ultimately as a 'just in case' need for defence.

Beyond these 'known' pā there are two other possible contenders, both of which are within the bounds of KPD.

In 1899 a Colonel Boscawen did a rough drawing of the area to accompany six photos he took. On the map he noted another pā which appears to be a major headland pā and was far greater in size than Te Matarae A Mana (Kauri Point). The hand-drawn nature of the plan does make



Kauri Point and surroundings. Traced map referred to in Col. Boscawen's photos. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira. PH-NEG-C5035.

* Davidson J (1990) 'Test Excavations at the Headland Pa at Kauri Point, Birkenhead, Auckland in 1971'. Records of the Auckland Institute and Museum.

interpretation difficult. There are two contenders for the site of this pā with its large ditches, first within the present day Naval base above Onetaunga Bay (Quarryman’s Bay) or slightly further west closer to Soldiers Bay. However, at this point in time evidence for this is untested and in both cases later development and use of the areas mentioned would have all but destroyed any above ground evidence.

The second possible pā recorded is named as Maunganui and according to the “Cultural Heritage Inventory” of 1994, Janet Davidson is thought to have identified ‘part of the Pā ditch in scrub just south and east of the trig at the corner of Onetaunga Road and the road to the Naval Base’. The general assumption is that it is situated on the ridge on which the Onetaunga trig is located, but there is still some doubt as later developments may have caused the landscape to take on forms which deceive the eye. It is interesting to note that Col. Boscawen did not include this pā on his map of 1899, a site he would have been aware of, unless of course the large pā mentioned above was in fact Maunganui and this has become a case of mistaken identity.

It is intriguing to think that there may yet be an unidentified pā site within KPD. If there was another promontory pā it is possible it was similar to the Kauri Point pā where it was not permanently occupied or even occupied for a long time. Instead it may have been one of many pā positioned to watch the comings and going of waka along the harbour. Overseeing the seasonal activities on the beaches below. Kauri Point pā is situated directly across from Meola reef, a well



An interpretation of how the bays and foreshore around the Waitemata could have been used by tangata whenua. Chris Gaskin (1990). Kendall Bay, Kauri Point, Waitemata Harbour. Auckland War Memorial Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira. PD-1995-1-6.

known shark nursery (mainly rig/dogfish) and oral traditions tell of Māori coming from all over Tamaki Makaurau at certain times of the year to hunt these sharks and bringing them to shore to process. If this was occurring in one part of the Waitemata then it is likely it was occurring in other nearby areas too. Fitzpatrick Bay would be an ideal candidate for a place in which people

“Ahi ka did not mean that occupation at each place had to be maintained all year round. However, regular visiting and use of the camps or temporary settlement affirmed authority in the region.”

M. Kawheru ‘Tamaki Foreshore and Harbour Report’ Auckland City Council 2004.

would occupy for short periods of time in order to take advantage of the seasonal ebb and flow of resources from the sea, such as snapper, flounder, yellow eyed mullet, pipis, cockles and oysters.

Already we are beginning to see a human landscape emerge, but pā are only one small side of much broader story. The importance of the harbour is attested to by the presence of these promontory/headland pā not only as a major route from east to west across Tamaki Makaurau but as a source of food. One of the most common archaeological sites through out Aotearoa New Zealand are shell middens. A check of Arch Site shows that there are three listed within the current perimeters of KPD and a further two in Onetaunga Bay to the east. A recent slip revealed another small midden which appears to have been on the edge of platform like area on the hill above Fitzpatrick Bay.

“When I went to school in 1956-59, a maths teacher who had part of a finger missing got side-tracked during one lesson and told us he used to sit in a boat over Meola Reef and pull sharks out of the water by their tails.”

John Sutton, local resident.

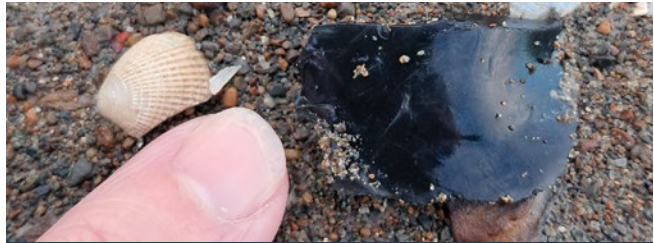
Shell middens are important sources of information, not only can they tell us what people were eating and when, but they can also tell us what past environments were like. Unfortunately for us, the middens previously recorded at Fitzpatrick Bay have all but eroded away. Col. Boscawens map refers to large pipi mounds in the area which are now considerably smaller in size. Coastal erosion is an ongoing problem around New Zealand and not just for the archaeology.



Shell middens up above the beach at Fitzpatrick Bay.

Occasionally, the odd artefact from the Māori use of the area can be found on the beach at Fitzpatrick Bay. Flakes of basalt and obsidian, a by product of stone tool manufacture, can tell us something about the connections local Māori had with wider Aotearoa. Obsidian in

particular was valued for its sharp cutting edge and often traded far and wide from its original source. It is important to note here that such artefacts should be left where found as per legislation - <https://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/2014/0026/latest/DLM4005414.html>.



An obsidian flake found at Fitzpatrick Bay (left where found).

Māori place names and their meanings

Waitematā – ‘The waters of the stone’ – referring to the tradition where a Te Arawa chief Kahumatamomoe placed a sacred mauri stone on Boat Rock thus naming the harbour.

Te Whenua Roa o Kahu (North Shore) – ‘The Greater Lands of Kahu’ – Kahu is the granddaughter of Maki, the namesake ancestor of the iwi Te Kawerau ā Maki who were based on the North Shore in the 17th century.

Tawhiwhi Kareao (Soldiers Bay) – named for the supplejack plant which once grew here in abundance. It was an important resource as it was used for the lashings on waka.



Beach at Fitzpatrick Bay viewed from up on the far cliff - near midden site.

The Arrival of the Europeans

Prior to the 1840s the upper Waitematā is generally ignored by the early Europeans in favour of more profitable areas of Tamaki Makaurau.

In 1840 Auckland becomes the capital of New Zealand and suddenly interest in the land opposite the fast growing settlement was piqued. In 1841 the Crown purchased a large

“Reverend Samuel Marsden is often credited with being the first to explore the area, in his diaries he states that he left the HMS Coromandel at Waiheke and was guided by Te Morenga to Riverhead where he then travelled overland to the Kaipara River – a route travelled by Māori for centuries.”

www.tmrowe.com

tract of land called ‘The Mahurangi Block’ which encompassed most of the North Shore and extended as far north as Te Arai. Much of the early purchases in the Birkenhead area were part of a land speculation trend without the land being settled or farmed. Significant chunks of land sold were the area from Rangitira Rd/Beach Rd to Soldiers Bay was sold to William Brown in 1845 and the area from Balmain and Domain Roads to the shore encompassing one hundred and ten acres being sold to a James Woolly also in 1845. However, it does not seem that either of them actually lived here. It was common practice for land to be bought speculatively and sold on in smaller parcels to settlers fresh off the boat so to speak.

One of the early settlers mentioned in relation to a dwelling on a map dated to 1849, the house was owned by a John Crisp and was situated close to what is now Fitzpatrick Bay. An advertisement in The New Zealander in 1849 has a ‘compact farm of 21 acres and 3 rods’ up for sale at Soldiers Bay. In 1865 further sales in Soldiers Bay were being advertised as ‘choice



Small pieces of Kauri gum can often be found on the beaches of the Upper Waitemata and were a source of income for many early settlers.



Some of the many bricks that can be found on the beach at Fitzpatrick Bay.

small farms for sale by auction’. For the newly arrived settlers who bought land in the area they were about to learn that farming in the traditional sense was not an easy enterprise. One such family were James Fitzpatrick, his wife Agnes and daughter Mary Ann, who arrived in New Zealand on the Jane Gifford in 1842. Reading through electoral roles and jury lists we find that James put his hand to a variety of occupations from brickmaker (the Jury list of 1842-1857), farmer and even gumdigger (1890 Electoral Role) to provide a life for himself and his family. The remains of his brickmaking activities can still be seen on the beach at the bay named after him.

Ferguson Peter	Tamaki	Farmer
Falwasser Henry J.	Durham street	Printer
Fielding Joseph	Shortland street	Confectioner
Field Michael	Parnell	Clerk
Fielder William	Wyndham street	Shipwright
Fearnley Stephen	Waterloo Quadrant	Tailor
Fitts John	Parnell	Carpenter
Finley John	Chapel street	ditto
Fitzpatrick James	Remuera	ditto
Fitzpatrick Edward	North shore	Brickmaker
Flatt John	Remuera	Settler
Flatt John	Parnell	Carpenter
Fleming Matthew	Remuera	Gardener
Fleming Samuel	Cook street	Carpenter
Flick Robert	Remuera	Clerk
Florance Thomas	Henderson's mill	Sawyer
Foley Edmund	Durham street	Surveyor
Fossait Thomas Spencer	Otahuhu	Publican
Fossait Samuel	Shortland street	Draper
Forsyth William	Wakefield street	ditto
Francis William	St. George's bay	Carpenter
French Isaac	Elen crescent	Seaman
	Muddy Creek	Sawyer

Jury List showing James Fitzpatrick as a brickmaker – the list is dated from the 1850s to 1870s for the whole of the Waitemata area. Image from ancestry.com.

Unlike Fitzpatrick Bay, Soldiers Bay often seems to have been the forgotten corner of the Domain. The earliest mention of Soldiers Bay is dated to an advertisement for a land sale in 1846 and the reason for its name is shrouded in speculation. One such speculation is that the bay gained its name as a result of an encampment of militia during the unsettled times of the mid-1800s. 1845 saw the sacking of Kororāreka and the beginning of the Northern Wars, to a fledgling township such as Auckland this would have set off alarm bells. To allay the fears of the settler's militia may have been positioned in various places to watch the comings and goings of Māori and with the Waitemata being an important routeway it would not be surprising to find a contingent or two stationed in various places. The high ground on either side of the bay would have provided a good position for militia to camp and it is likely this is the reason for the name of the bay.



The eastern end of Soldiers Bay looking west with the mangroves in the foreshore.

In 1888 Governor William Jervois permanently reserved for the purpose of recreation 133 acres of land (allotment 162 and 163) in the Parish of Takapuna. It had been his hope that the area was turned into a national park, a place of tranquillity for Aucklanders. This was the area from Kendall Bay to the eastern end of Fitzpatrick Bay. In 1913 the Harbour Board acquired a further forty-two acres which included the pā listed as Kauri Point at the western end of Kendall Bay (allotment 164) and which had previously been owned by Sir John Logan Campbell until his death in 1912.

'In the mid-1970s, I was idly browsing a large box of carefully labelled and dated glass plate negatives in a Manukau Road antique store, when - amongst copious images of mostly the far north (especially of various goldfields) - the words "Soldiers' Bay" leapt out at me, along with the date '1897'.

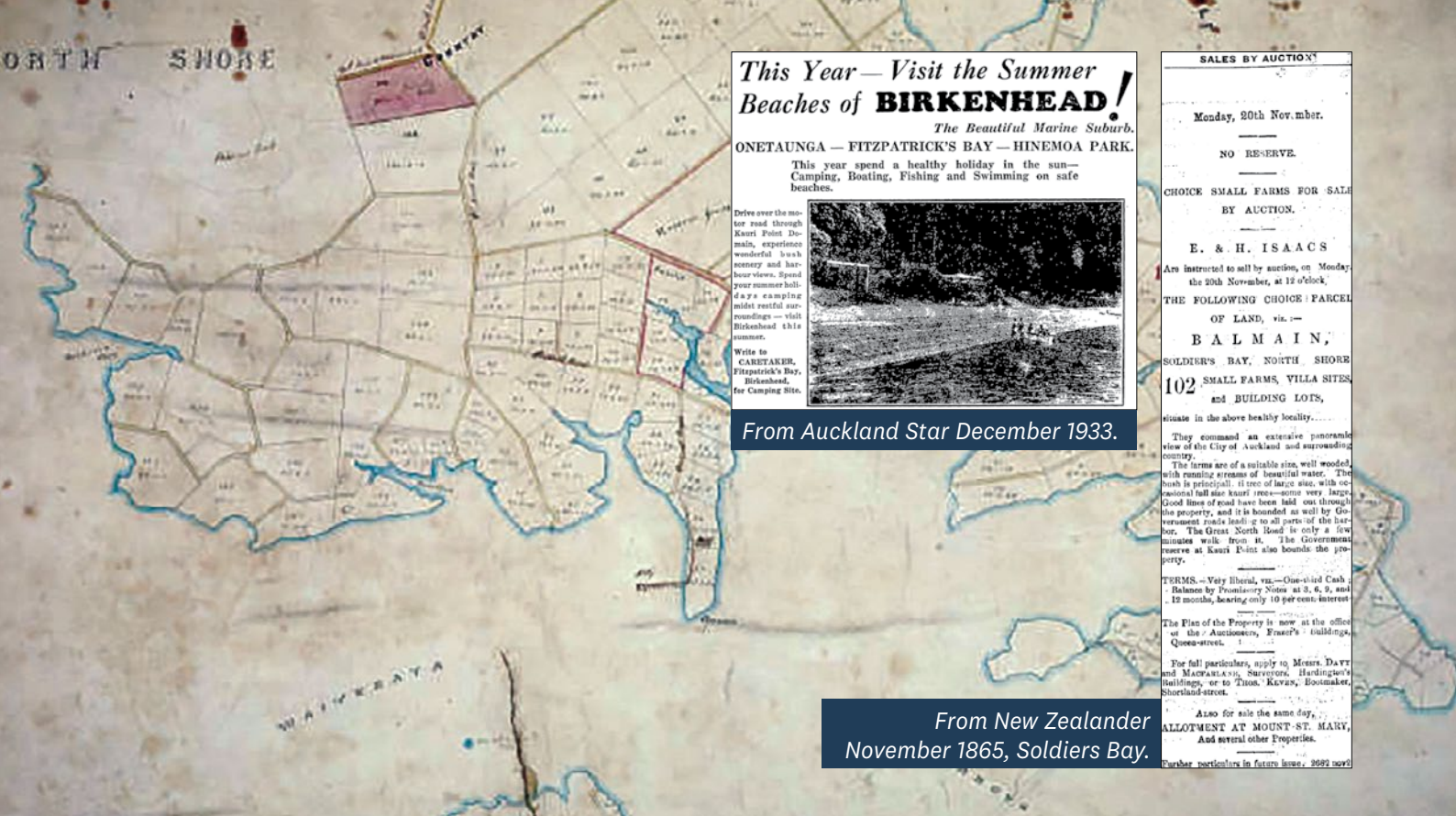
There on the plate was unmistakably 'our Bay', with a sizeable old flat-bottomed yacht sitting up on the shelly south beach, presumably awaiting the next high tide to sail off, while two figures - probably the crew - wander the more distant low tide zone to pass the time. The photographer - who arguably also came on the boat - seemed to systematically be recording, maybe for posterity, maybe simply out of interest, regional places and things that took his interest in those early years - perhaps out of a prescient sense of environmental fragility. At least the photographer was enthusiastically prepared to lug about to numerous remote spots a heavy timber camera and its associated processing gear - not an easy task.

I recall paying a proverbial "arm and a leg" for that single big plate negative, and today a large oak-framed black-and-white print hangs above our fireplace.

So far, so ordinary, but what grabbed my attention was that about ten or so metres beyond the perched boat, and right on the south bank can be seen the unmistakable form of a pine - a *Pinus radiata* - of at least 50 to 60 years in age. This was in 1897 remember, so this exotic tree had to have taken root virtually when the city was founded in 1840, or maybe a viable pinecone just dropped off cut timber being floated down harbour and took root on the Bay shore.'

George Farrant BArch CNZM, local resident in personal correspondence.

It is interesting to note that the photographer mentioned could well be Col. Boscawen who was wandering around the area at this time photographing the landscapes he saw. The presence of the pine tree could indeed provide evidence that there was a fledgling European presence on this side of the Waitemata.



This Year—Visit the Summer Beaches of **BIRKENHEAD!**
The Beautiful Marine Suburb.
ONETAUNGA — FITZPATRICK'S BAY — HINEMOA PARK.
 This year spend a healthy holiday in the sun—Camping, Boating, Fishing and Swimming on safe beaches.

Drive over the motor road through Kauri Point Domain, experience wonderful bush scenery and harbor views. Spend your summer holiday a camping amidst restful surroundings—visit Birkenhead this summer.

Write to **CARETAKER, Fitzpatrick's Bay, Birkenhead, for Camping Sites.**

From Auckland Star December 1933.

SALES BY AUCTION

Monday, 20th Nov.mbr.

NO RESERVE.

CHOICE SMALL FARMS FOR SALE BY AUCTION.

E. & H. ISAACS
 Are instructed to sell by auction, on Monday, the 20th November, at 12 o'clock,
THE FOLLOWING CHOICE PARCELS OF LAND, viz.:
BALMAIN,
SOLDIERS BAY, NORTH SHORE,
102 SMALL FARMS, VILLA SITES, and BUILDING LOTS,
 situate in the above healthy locality.....

They command an extensive panoramic view of the City of Auckland and surrounding country.

The farms are of a suitable size, well wooded, with running streams of beautiful water. The bush is principally of one of large size, with occasional full size kauri trees—some very large. Good lines of road have been laid out through the property, and it is bounded as well by Government roads leading to all parts of the harbor. The Great North Road is only a few minutes walk from it. The Government reserve at Kauri Point also bounds the property.

TERMS.—Very liberal, viz.—One-third Cash; Balance by Promissory Note at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months, bearing only 10 per cent. interest.

The Plan of the Property is now at the office of the Auctioneers, Fraser's Buildings, Queen-street.

For full particulars, apply to Messrs. DART and MACRAE & CO. Surveyors, Harding's Buildings, or to THOS. KEVIN, Bootmaker, Shortland-street.

Also for sale the same day,
ALLOTMENT AT MOUNT ST. MARY,
 and several other Properties.

Further particulars in future issues. 2692 new

From New Zealander November 1865, Soldiers Bay.

Plan of the North Shore 1866 – Photo credit Auckland Libraries Heritage Collection map 4180.

Further to this the area around Fitzpatrick and Soldiers Bay were then added to the Domain in 1916. An article in the New Zealand Herald in 1916 stated that the reserve had a fine waterfront and had in the past had been much used as a camping and picnic ground. 1916 was also the year of the first meeting of the newly appointed Kauri Point Domain Board, during this meeting it was agreed that campers were to pay a small fee and a proposal for a wharf was put forward. In 1928 the fee for camping in the Domain was five shillings a week and 2/6 for additional weeks.

The 1920s saw the beaches at Fitzpatrick and Onetaunga Bays grow in popularity, it was reported in The Sun in January 1929 that Mr O. Handlon was re-elected as caretaker and who stated ‘...that Fitzpatrick Bay and Onetaunga were very popular now, especially with the Auckland public, but the lack of conveniences and bathing sheds was a drawback.’ The late 1920s saw the management of the Domain transfer to the Birkenhead Borough Council.

By this stage the Birkenhead Borough Council had taken over the management of the Domain and by August of that same year provisions were made for the addition of a ladies bathing shed and toilet block at Onetaunga. By early 1930

Onetaunga Bay boasted a new toilet block, a bathing shed and a wharf.

In 1933 The New Zealand Herald reported that the construction of a road from Balmain Road to Kauri Point Domain was almost completed allowing ‘...motor traffic with access to Fitzpatrick Bay...during the holiday this beach has been visited by as many as four hundred people in one day.’ Access to these popular beaches was primarily by boat, however a check of the early maps and aerial photographs it is possible to see the footprint of the aforementioned early road called Domain Road (see map) which led down to Fitzpatrick Bay. Evidence for a small jetty/wharf at Fitzpatrick Bay can be seen occasionally at a low tide when the stumps of timber piles can be seen.

William Henry Rickwood was the caretaker of the Domain until 1938, who lived in the small house with his family on the hill above Fitzpatrick Bay. Oral histories record how Williams’ wife would keep a small store selling sweets, soft drinks and other useful supplies. There was also a ‘ponga-house’ where Mrs Rickwood would provide hot water and often sold tea and scones to visitors. There is very little that remains of this house today, just a level area which has been cleared

and planted with natives. However, there is evidence of both the campers and the caretakers in form of the rubbish they were throwing away. Often along the bay sherds of old ceramics and bottle glass dating from the late 1800s to the mid-1930s can be found, undoubtedly there is a European midden that has eroded (and continues to do so) onto the beach.

However, these good times were not to last.

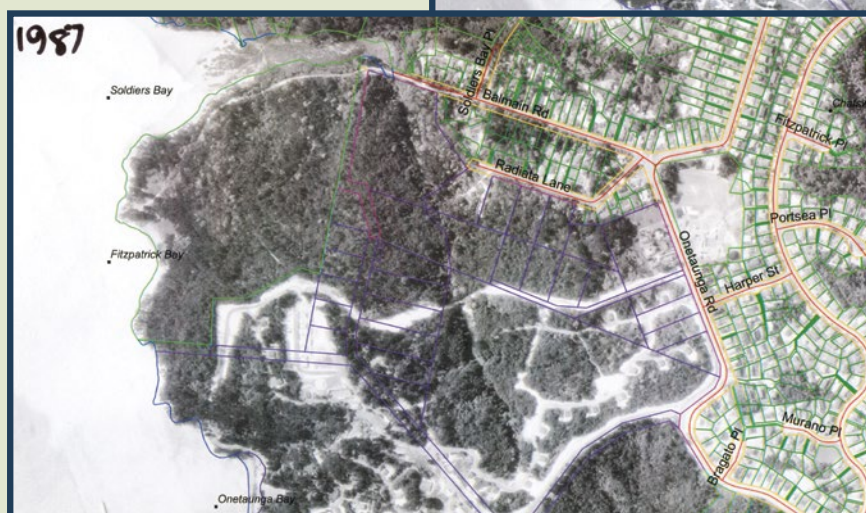
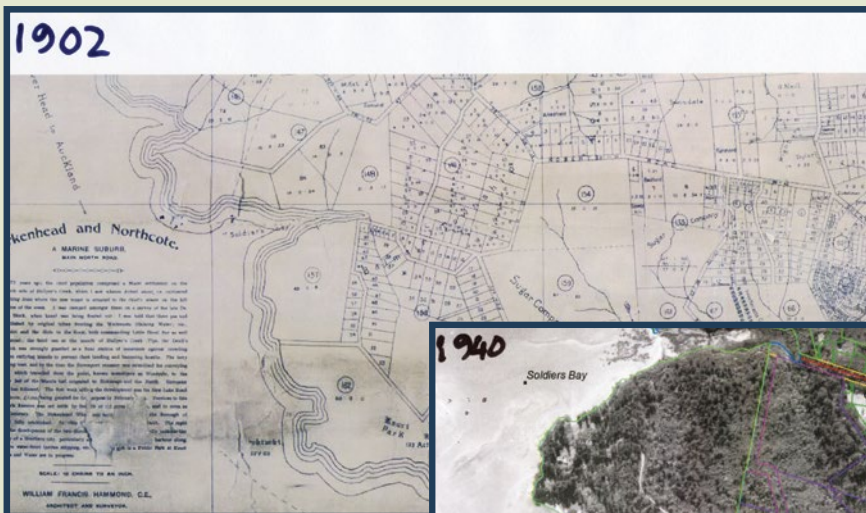
1935 saw sixty two and half acres of land at the eastern end of the Domain being set aside for defence purposes, an area which included the popular beach of Onetaunga Bay. At the end



Jack Canty and Mr Rickwood (caretaker) 1930s. Photo credit Auckland Libraries Heritage Collection B06662.

Images of the Kauri Point Domain over the years

Courtesy of Kim Ollivier.



of 1939 the new naval base at Onetaunga Bay advised the Birkenhead Borough Council that it was 'undesirable to allow camping at Fitzpatrick Bay'. Thus ended the days of carefree camping at the Domain and Domain Road was closed off to the general public. The Navy later acquired more of the surrounding area in the 1950s and another more small block of land adjacent to the Domain in 1985.

The cottage on the hill was variously occupied until 1958 when the last resident



Ceramic finds from the beach . Top left dates to mid-late 1800s and the time of the Fitzpatrick family. Bottom right early-mid 1900s and most likely belonging to one of the early caretakers.

(a Mr Parrish) left and by 1960 the cottage was demolished. The early 1960s saw the felling of a number of the pine trees and the proceeds from the sale of the timber to be used to develop the Domain. In early 1965 the Birkenhead Borough Council levelled and grassed the area behind the beach at Fitzpatrick Bay, installed two culverts at the end of Balmain Road, creating a causeway across the swamp and clearing a track around



On the hill between Soldiers Bay and Fitzpatrick Bay there once stood a house – today only its footprint can be seen with newly planted natives. The bushes in front of the pines are roughly where the house was situated.

“As well as the tent sites at Kendall Bay, there were other camping places, near the wharf at Onetaunga Bay and at Fitzpatrick Bay which is the beach at the present Kauri Point Domain. Pre-World War Two and back through the Depression years, tents appeared each summer for a back-to-nature holiday by bush and sea. Much of the housework was left behind at home and there was no problem keeping the children amused. There were good sandy beaches and the harbour water was clear and clean in those days before the march of suburbia.”

From a pamphlet of remembrances celebrating twenty years of Kauri Point Centennial Park, available in the Birkenhead Library

the edge of the hill to provide vehicular access to the beach (the present day track to the beach). Dressing sheds were built at the beach using timber from the previously demolished cottage. Remains of the cottage can be seen on the hill at the end of the path leading to Fitzpatrick Bay, it had one of the most enviable views in the area.

The management of the Domain changed hands again in 1989 when the North Shore City Council was formed, and Kauri Point Domain became a forgotten corner of the North Shore. In the 1990s a group lobbied for a new regional park which ran from Chelsea all the way around to Soldiers Bay (including Kauri Park and Muriel Fisher Reserve). Their intention was to have a bush corridor to connect all the separate reserves thus providing a larger habitat for native bird species. Unfortunately, this did not happen although it did eventually result in the formation of the Kauri Point Centennial Park which covers the area from the eastern side of the Naval Depot to Chelsea Sugar Refinery.

Fun Facts...

1860s Māori equalled Europeans in population of the North Shore.

1880s Birkenhead was a rural centre, and the population of the North Shore was around 2,000, of which 65% lived in Devonport.

The Present

Kauri Point Domain today is a suburban haven enjoyed by many from all walks of life. Fundamentally the Domain has not changed a great deal in the last fifty or so years, although it is now under the management of Auckland Council. The 1960s access road and causeway into Fitzpatrick Bay are still there and the bush clad slopes remain...well, bush clad. The caretakers house on the spur between

Fitzpatrick Bay and Soldiers Bay is no longer standing but its outline can still be seen. Recent years has seen the parts of the bush cleared of invasive exotics and replanted with native varieties, tracks cleared and remade, as well planting of the less stable edges, work done by a group of local volunteers – The Soldiers Bay and Kauri Point Restoration Group and their predecessors.

John Sutton recounts his initiation into the volunteer group... “What walking the dog can lead to - Son’s family gets a dog. By the 2010’s both parents are going to work. Grandad agrees to give the dog a daily walk. Kauri Point Domain is at the bottom of the road, so he begins the daily dog walking routine. Next to taking children to school, dog walking is very sociable. He frequently shares the walk to the beach and back with Debs Pinnock and they remark that the bush has not been, and is not being, maintained very well. After a few years of off-loading in this way, Debs asks if grandad would be interested in putting his muscles where his mouth is. In early 2018 he joins the fledgling group which Debs and David Wharton have started. They begin by attacking two areas of invasive bamboo, privet, monkey apple and pampas and then replanting them with natives.

The dog and grandad became regular volunteers.”

Debs Pinnock takes up the story...“The first task the group of 8-10 volunteers tackled was to cut and paste some large areas of bamboo. It took several months of weekly 2 hour sessions of backbreaking hard labour that resulted in both eradicating the bamboo and gelling a tight knit team of wonderful merry men and women. The group continued for 5 years with weekly Friday morning working bees transforming the reserve by improving access to the upper tracks, clearing drains, removing pest plants, planting native plants, and arranging with council for contractors to remove many large pines and wattles with the aim to restore the 17.5 hectare reserve of native forest and wetlands.”



The retreat of the Soldiers Bay Army - August 2018.



Clearing the last of the bamboo - September 2018.



Some of the current KPD volunteers at the entrance (John Sutton, Susan Snowden and Stuart Farley).

The other component of the Domain is Soldiers Bay, today it is only accessible at low tide and only because of the efforts of Garth Barfoot (along with friends and whanau). A long-time resident of Island Bay and Birkenhead, Garth enjoys a loop run/tramp but in order to include Soldiers Bay in his run routine he realised he would need to find a way to cross the mud and deep creek.

His solution? A bridge and stepping stones. Using logs from pine trees that had already succumbed to erosion he first built a log bridge which on the first really high tide floated away.

The next bridge was thoughtfully engineered so it would float but stay in place, very much a case of 'if at first you don't succeed...'



Many volunteer hours were spent ring barking large wattles. Photo courtesy Garth Barfoot.



The creation of the bridge and stepping stones at Soldiers Bay by Garth Barfoot and friends. Photos courtesy Garth Barfoot.



Team ready for planting - June 2020.



Winter planting of flaxes at entrance way - July 2020.

Today the Domain is one of the few places dogs are allowed off leash (and under control) all year round, as a result it is a favoured space for dog walkers (see link below regarding rules around dogs on council land). Of the two beaches that dogs can explore Fitzpatrick Bay is the most popular – Soldiers Bay is best accessed at low tide and can be a muddy walk for the unsuspecting human (the dogs love it). In addition to the tracks leading to the two beaches there are also a couple of trackways through the bush for the more adventurous.

“Kauri Point Domain is one of Auckland’s last remaining off-leash bush areas and is a precious resource for all responsible dog owners... there is something for every pup – and we all know the best thing for a dog is a good run and some fresh air! Very few areas are left to allow our urban companions the off-leash freedom that Kauri Point Domain delivers...As a professional pack walker, I have witnessed first hand the positive impact of the Domain on the lives of the dogs and their owners.”

Lisa – Pawsome Pack Adventures.

Unfortunately, there have been issues in the recent past regarding larger dog packs and the damage they have done to parts of the Domain, in addition to individual owners not controlling or cleaning up after their dogs. It is hoped that in the future that none of these factors will cause the council to review the current off-leash conditions – this is of course dependent on the co-operation of all who use the Domain.

The above was written prior to the proposed council amendments to the dog access bylaws (2025) and which is at the feedback stage.

On the weekends Kauri Point Domain is used by families enjoying a relatively easy walk (it is accessible for sturdy pushchairs) with even little legs finding the walk not too difficult. At a mid to high tide the beach at Fitzpatrick Bay is a pleasant space for youngsters to explore and swim, the small cave at the western end of the

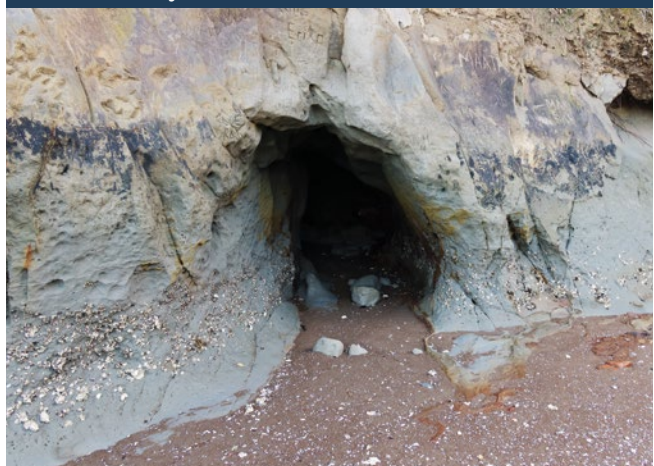


Dogs at Fitzpatrick Bay.

beach is always popular. Over the years I have witnessed the Domain being used as a backdrop for film and photography students and it was once a location for a music video. In addition, it has also been used for weddings, by LARPer's (Live Action Role Play), local school groups (outdoor education), Play centre outings and teenagers just hanging out. In the last couple of years Fitzpatrick Bay has hosted Diwali celebrations – the Waitemata becoming a sacred river and substitute for the holy Ganges.



Amongst the mangrove seed pods are the remains of the marigolds used in Diwali celebrations. The Waitemata serving as a proxy for the Ganges – the sacred river of Hindus.



A favourite spot with youngsters – the small cave at the western end of Fitzpatrick Bay.

The large grassy area (either above the beach or below) at Fitzpatrick Bay makes a great place to sit and enjoy the quiet of the upper harbour any day, to watch the ferries travelling back and forth and the occasional orca or dolphin pod – if you are very lucky!

Erosion continues to be a problem and in recent years the increased rainfall has resulted in some impressive slips bringing down a number of the large pines. The heavy downpour and subsequent floods in January 2023, along with Cyclone Gabrielle almost remodelled the beach at Fitzpatrick Bay. Today only the numerous prone pines at the far end of the beach are a reminder of that event. Efforts have been made to plant the slopes of the cliffs with hardier varieties of plants to prevent the cliffs crumbling.

On a personal note, Kauri Point Domain has been a place of respite, a place where an early morning walk with the dog sets me up for my day.

Please note that there are no toilet facilities in the Domain and only one rubbish bin at the entrance. Remember to take your rubbish with you so everyone can enjoy a clean, natural experience in all parts of the Domain.

See Auckland Council rules on dogs in public places

<https://www.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/dogs-animals/guide-for-dog-owners/Pages/rules-dogs-public-places.aspx>



The Future

What does the future for Kauri Point Domain look like? Good question...

From those who I ask this question; two things became obvious. One, the need to keep the Domain dog friendly, it is one of the few place's dogs are able to access all year round. With its access to the water and the bush there is plenty of space for dogs to be dogs. Second, for any changes to the Domain to be done sympathetically. As someone pointed out to me, it is only a short drive to the CBD and yet when walking in the Domain, you feel as if you are hours away. The peace and tranquillity of KPD is something to be treasured.

The work of the Restoration Group, and others, highlights the importance of encouraging native species, of keeping the paths clear and accessible. There are some who would like to see the mangroves in Soldiers Bay better controlled, to the point of returning the beach to the way it once was (minus the mangroves).

Recently, plans have been approved by the Kaipātiki Local Board for a new walkway through Soldiers Bay, a boardwalk that would go behind the two small beaches and bypass the old stepping stones and bridge. Thus, Soldiers

Bay becomes accessible all the time and not just at low tide, and dare I say it, but perhaps lose something of the sense of adventure when walking there?

Other suggestions for possible improvements have included a toilet at Fitzpatrick Bay – this has been shelved due to expense – and the removal of the gate across the entrance to the Domain. General opinion from local users is that this would be a bad idea and once again encourage people to fly tip, something which was a significant problem before the gate was installed (and was the reason for it).

Whatever happens in the future, it is hoped that Kauri Point Domain remains the haven it always has been, a place where a person can recharge their batteries away from the hustle and bustle of a city always on the go.

In Te Ao Māori the natural world is referred to as Te Taiao which encapsulates all that surrounds us from the land to the climate and to all living beings. Ko au Te Taiao, ko Te Taiao ko au (I am nature, and nature is me) refers to the interconnectedness of people and the natural world, an eternal relationship of respect, reciprocity and interdependence. If we look after the land, it will look after us.

Ko au Te Taiao, ko Te Taiao ko au

Glossary

Pā – a place used by Māori; usually identified by the presence of defensive banks and ditches, typically found in prominent places. In general, the history of the pā can be complicated with many phases of settlement and abandonment occurring over a long period.

Shell Midden – the most common archaeological site in Aotearoa New Zealand. These can be as small as scatter of shell to large mounds. Typically they consist of the remains of a variety of shellfish and fish bone. Archaeologically they are important because they can tell us about past environments and how people were utilising their surroundings.

Pleistocene – A geological epoch that lasted from approximately 2.58 million to 11,700 years ago. It included the last ice age, with glaciers covering large parts of the Earth and was characterised by repeated glaciations and interglacial climatic cycle.

Kainga – a Māori settlement or village, usually undefended. These can either be permanent settlements or temporary.

Obsidian – volcanic glass used by Māori to make sharp cutting tools, often traded over long distances.



Broken wattle corner on Top Track.



Entrance to Kauri Point Domain.



View from the upper grass area.

Acknowledgments

No writing project can be done alone particularly a project such as this. A big thank you goes to Stuart Farley from Advent Marketing who provided the digital know how to put this book together, John Sutton for his knowledge of the area and the people. The Auckland Museum and Auckland Libraries for providing some of the photos. Thank you also to all the people who took the time to talk and write to me, who answered my questions, provided suggestions, photos and maps – it was all vital and gratefully received – Debs Pinnock, Lisa from Pawsome Pack Adventures, Garth Barfoot, George Farrant, Kim Ollivier. Fiona Smal from Pest Free Kaipātiki who provided the comprehensive plant list. This book would not exist without all of your contributions.

I would also like to give a special shout out to all the people past and present who have endeavoured to keep Kauri Point Domain a special place. Without their mahi, we would not have this unique space – here's to many more years of bush, beach and blue skies!

Toni-maree currently lives in the Kaipātiki area of Auckland, New Zealand where she volunteers for the Auckland Museum. You can usually find her in the depths of the basement helping/hindering the archaeology department, where it's always time for coffee. Toni-maree's passions include archaeology, writing, storytelling, beach combing, making art and long dog walks. Feel free to check out her blog - www.tmrowe.com for a range of articles about the past.