



HERITAGE NEW ZEALAND
POUHERE TAONGA

New Zealand Heritage List / Rārangi Kōrero - Extract of Report for a Wāhi
Tūpuna

Meretoto and Motuara, Tōtaranui (List no. 9780)



Part of J Clevely, "Cook arriving at Queen Charlotte Sound, 12 February 1777", Parker Gallery, London

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Heritage New Zealand Pouhere Taonga

BRIEF SUMMARY

Meretoto and Motuara is a traditional area of Māori settlement in Tōtaranui with pā, kāinga, māhinga kai, tauranga waka and rua kōhatu, and a place of first encounter between tangata whenua and early European explorers from the late 18th century onwards.

Numerous hapū have inhabited Tōtaranui and exploited its bountiful natural resources since the arrivals of waka such as the *Uruao* and the *Matahourua* in the region over half a millennia ago. Meretoto has long been used as a sheltered tauranga waka for journeys around the Sounds or across Te Moana a Raukawa, and Motuara as a defensive position.

From 1770 to 1777, the scientific and exploratory British expeditions led by James Cook stayed over 170 days in total at Meretoto, which Cook named Ship Cove. This was the first place of exchange between Europeans and Māori in Te Waipounamu since the arrival of Abel Tasman's expedition at Mohua (Golden Bay) in 1642. The presence of Tupaia, high priest and navigator of Taputapuātea marae on Rai'atea who joined the crew of the *Endeavour* upon its departure from Tahiti in 1769, also made it the first known place of reconnection between Te Wai Pounamu and the ancestral homeland in the Society Islands in centuries.

The sheltered anchorage, trade with the tangata whenua at Meretoto and on the pā at Motuara, and plentiful water and food supplies on offer made it a useful destination for many later visits by European ships, such as the Russian expedition led by Fabian Bellingshausen in 1820, or the initial voyage of the New Zealand Company in 1839.

The sustained interaction between local Māori hapū and European visitors, particularly Cook's expeditions, make this a place of a key site of early cultural exchange with Europeans. In turn, the records taken by these expeditions in the form of maps, portraits, and journal accounts, provide a valuable record for tangata whenua of the lives of their ancestors.

1. IDENTIFICATION¹

1.1. Name of Wāhi Tūpuna

Meretoto & Motuara

Other names: Ship Cove (Meretoto), Hippah Island (South end of Motuara)

1.2. Location Information

Tōtaranui / Queen Charlotte Sound
Marlborough Sounds

Additional Location Information.

GPS Co-ordinates:

1705400, 5450000 (NZTM 2000); 41° 5'47.90" S, 174°15'6.05"E (WGS 84)

Local Authority

Marlborough District Council.

1.3. Current Legal Description

Section 1 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 2 BLK XVI Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 7 BLK XVI Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 9 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 3 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1926 p.57), Section 4 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1976 p.1932), Marlborough Land District.

1.4. Extent of Wāhi Tūpuna

Extent includes part of the land described as Section 1 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 2 BLK XVI Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 7 BLK XVI Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 9 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1986 p.3943), Section 3 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1926 p.57), Section 4 BLK XV Gore SD (*NZ Gazette* 1976 p.1932), Pt Seabed, Marlborough Land District. The extent includes the bay known as Meretoto up to the 40m contour line from Te Ahitaore point to the north to Ekiera point to the South and the island known as Motuara.

1.5. Identification Eligibility

There is sufficient information included in this report to identify this wāhi tūpuna.

1.6. Existing Heritage Identification

Reserves

The land is set aside in reserves for scenic and historic purposes (*NZ Gazette* 1926 p.57 [Section 3 BLK XV Gore SD], 1976 p.1932 [Section 4 BLK XV Gore SD], & 1986 p.3943 [Sections 1, 2, 7 & 9 BLK XV Gore SD]).

New Zealand Archaeological Association

The archaeological sites with the following references have been recorded by this

¹ This section is supplemented by visual aids in Appendix 1 of the report.

association in the wāhi tūpuna – Q26/10, Q26/5, Q26/8, Q26/9, Q26/15, Q26/16, Q26/17, Q26/18, Q26/19, Q26/20, Q26/21.

2. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

2.1. General Nature of Wāhi Tūpuna

Motuara is a small island lying 3km offshore of Meretoto near the entrance of Tōtaranui / Queen Charlotte Sound to Raukawa Moana / Cook Strait. Both Motuara and Meretoto, the bay it shelters, were traditional places of settlement and bases for foraging, cultivation, quarrying and manufacture, hunting and fishing for local inhabitants. Motuara also had a pā on its southern end which was occupied temporarily as a defensive position when necessary by kāinga from the surrounding area, as first documented by James Cook's expedition on their first visit in 1770 when it was dubbed Hippah Island ("he pā"), and Meretoto named Ship Cove. From 1770 to 1777, Cook's expeditions at one time documented several hundred people living in clusters of whare here, while at other times, the area was void of inhabitants until campsites were set up for trade after the arrival of his ships. By contrast, in 1839, the travellers on board the New Zealand Company's ship the *Tory* noted that Meretoto was devoid of inhabitants due to it having been declared tapu, but that the pā at the southern end of Motuara was still lightly fortified, and pigs had been released on the island to breed by the local inhabitants.

Approximately 1,700 acres (6.9 km²) of land around and including Meretoto, as well as and the entire island of Motuara (4.5 km²) have been declared Scenic and Historic Reserves from 1926 onwards and are now managed by the Department of Conservation. With the regeneration of bush from 1926 and the eradication of rats in 1992, Motuara has been turned into a sanctuary for birds including the rowi kiwi and the Maud Island frog. A large stone memorial to James Cook was erected in 1913 on the shore at Meretoto, which now has a wharf used as an entrance point for the popular Queen Charlotte Sound walking track. The Department of Conservation worked with local iwi to install new visitor facilities and interpretation panels in 2006.

2.2. Wahi Tūpuna Statement

Meretoto and Motuara are traditional places of settlement offering tauranga waka for expeditions around Tōtaranui and across Raukawa Moana, defensive positions, cultivation, kai gathering, stone manufacturing and trade, and were occupied at various times by ancestors of Te Tau Ihu iwi over centuries. They are of particular significance to Ngāti Kuia, Rangitāne ki Wairau, Te Ātiawa o te Waka a Māui, Ngāti Apa ki te Rā Tō, Ngāti Kōata, and Ngāti Toa due to it being a place of encounter with European expeditions from 1769 onwards, and the records created by these expeditions of the tūpuna who lived here.

While some of the early encounters were fraught, the European arrivals generally interacted peacefully with local hapū, trading goods and also exchanging knowledge. Cook's crews in particular established vegetable gardens, grazed their animals (and introduced some to the region), and spent over 170 days here. Most importantly for tangata whenua they recorded valuable observations of their ancestors daily lives, including portraits, observations of their fishing and cultivation techniques, whare and

waka, clothing and tā moko, and so forth in logs, journals and diaries. As they visited a number of times over the course of eight years they were also able to observe changes in Māori society that had resulted from European interaction.

These recorded observations have given iwi a portal to the past and their tūpuna, hence, this is a whai tūpuna of the utmost importance.