Belmont Regional Park History

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B. HISTORICAL

The land included within the Belmont Park is made up of a stretch of hills that lie between the Wellington and the Porirua harbours. Over time, from the arrival of Maori through to the settlement of Europeans in the district, both harbours have been important for their resources and as places of occupation. It is not surprising then, that the peoples who have occupied the greater Wellington district, soon found routes to link these two harbours. It was over the lands that now lay within the Belmont Regional Park that these links were established. From pre-European tracks, to the building of permanent roads, these links provide a consistent theme and vehicle to tell the history of the lands within the Park.

(a) Pre-European Maori Occupation

In Maori tradition it is recorded that the voyager Kupe, came to Te Whanganui a Tara (now known as Wellington Harbour) as part of his extensive travels. Several place names within the harbour have come from Kupe.[1] The next recorded explorer was Whatonga who named the harbour after his son Tara. Settlement of this area was undertaken by peoples who claimed descent from Whatonga. These included Ngai Tara, Rangitane, Muaupoko and Ngati Apa. The development of Wellington peoples continued with successive migrations into and out of Te Whanganui a Tara. One of the most recent arrivals before the advent of Europeans was the Ngati Ira who had come from the east coast of the North Island and had intermarried with the descendants of Tara. By the start of the nineteenth century, Ngati Ira were settled along the east coast of Te Whanganui a Tara from Waiwhetu to Turakirae. At this time, Heretaunga (now know as the Hutt Valley) was inhabited by two hapu known as Rakaiwhakairi and Ngati Kahukuraawhitia. These people were descendants of Iraturoto, Toi (the grandfather of Whatonga) and Kahungunu. They had also intermarried with Ngai Tara and Rangitane of the Wairarapa.

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[1] Information on which this subsection is based has come from Waitangi Tribunal *Te Whanganui a Tara me ona takiwa*. Wellington:Waitangi Tribunal, 2003, pp.17-43

vi. Privately Owned Farm Land to the East and South of Korokoro Valley

Privately owned farm land to the east and south is visible from the park and is part of the park's landscape setting. The character of this land influences the nature of the landscape experience which the park provides, just as the park is part of the wider landscape setting of these properties. The detail and complexity of properties to the east of Stratton Street complement the character of this zone. At present the properties on the slopes to the south of Korokoro merge with the remote natural character of this area. However, afforestation of these properties could bring a change to this character.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE INSERT?

Just as Ngati Ira, Rakaiwhakairi and Ngati Kahukuraawhitia occupied the environs of the Hutt valley, so too did other whanau from these groupings reside around Porirua harbour and on the western coast. With the close relationships that existed between those who lived within Heretaunga and Porirua, it is likely that the tracks known to exist at the time of European arrival, were in existence many hundreds of years previously and dated from the beginning of human settlement in the district. There were two primary routes linking Te Whanganui a Tara and Porirua. One began from what is now called the Korokoro stream and after following the stream for some distance, rose up and over the ridges until it descended down towards Porirua Harbour following the Kenepuru stream. The other traveled from the Pauatahanui arm of the Porirua Harbour in a southerly direction over the hills towards the Hutt Valley and emerging at the Heretaunga (Hutt) River near Taita.

Early in the nineteenth century, the occupation of Te Whanganui a Tara was to change dramatically. In 1819 and 1821, war parties armed with muskets came from the north and fought with the resident people. Those who took part in these raids included, at different times, Ngapuhi, Ngati Toa, Waikato, Ngati Maniapoto and Ngati Whatua. Although several battles were fought and lost by the Wellington groups, their attackers from the north did not occupy the land.

Following these military excursions, a series of migrations to Te Whanganui a Tara came from Kawhia and Taranaki. These began in the early 1820s and continued for a number of years bringing groups such as Ngati Toa, Ngati Mutunga, Ngati Tama, Te Atiawa, Ngati Raukawa and several others to different places around the Wellington district. During this invasion, a key feature of the Belmont Regional Park landscape was named. It is said that the Ngati Mutunga chief Te Poki claimed the stream and gully of Korokoro by saying: "Ko te korokoro tenei o taku tamiti" (This place is the throat of my child). The child's name was presumably Te Mana as the full name for the Korokoro stream is Te Korokoro o Te Mana.[2]

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[2] Best, Elsdon, "Te Whanganui a Tara", *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, v.10 no.3 p.154

Several other recorded pre-European placenames lay just outside of the boundaries of the Regional Park. One of these is Puketirotiro, which is now known as Maori Point. Although the exact origin of Puketirotiro is not recorded, its name suggests that it may have been a lookout point. As Adkin has commented: "It is probably one of the most comprehensive viewpoints in the Wellington Harbour area and is easily accessible; the whole harbour (except its north-west shoreline), the lower part of the Hutt Valley and the Rimutaka Range are all in full view and in good conditions form a magnificent prospect."[3]

Down towards the harbour, a hill named Nga Puhoro is located although the exact site has not been identified.[4] Two other sites have been identified around the Korokoro Stream. One – Te Ahiparera – lay on the northern side of the stream. Commentators have speculated that it was the site of an old earthworks pa, but this has not been confirmed.[5] To the west of the Korokoro Stream is a place recorded as Te Raho-o-Te Kapawai. Te Kapowai is said to have been a Ngati Kahungunu ancestor.[6]

Following the arrival of the Kawhia and Taranaki peoples, the resulting occupation and nature of land rights around the harbour was complex and multi-faceted. Around the northern shores of Te Whanganui a Tara, Ngati Mutunga were the principal residents until their departure for the Chatham Islands in 1835. Te Atiawa groups took up the lands formerly occupied by Ngati Mutunga. The significance of the track system from Heretaunga to Porirua is reflected by the location of Te Puni's pa on the western side of Pito-one beach, alongside the Korokoro Stream at the entranceway of the track. It is thought that the area within the Park was covered by heavy bush but that by the time of European arrival, clearings had been located on the hillside facings above the valley by Pito-one Maori.[7]

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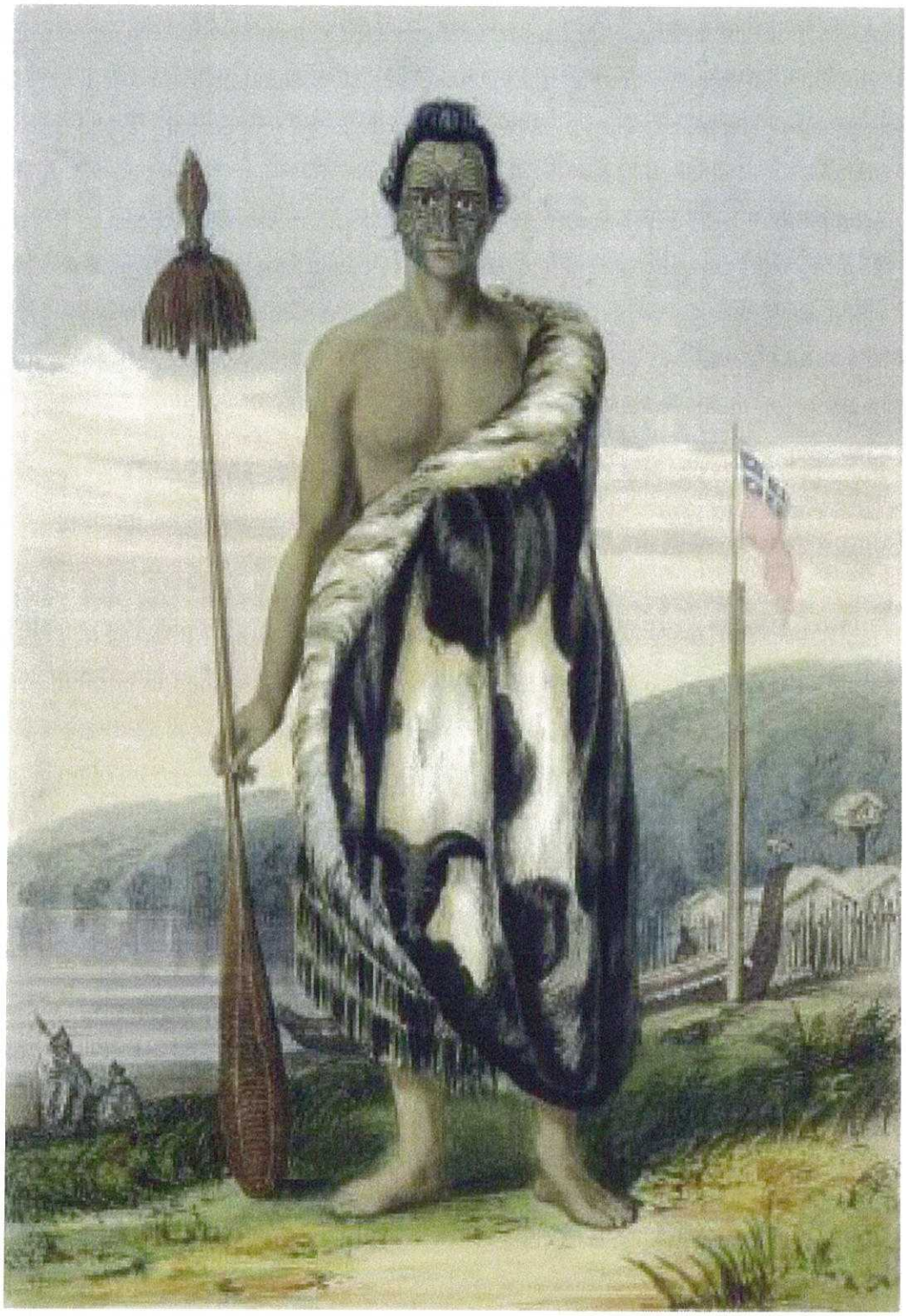
[3] Adkin, George Leslie, *The great harbour of Tara : traditional Maori place-names and sites of Wellington harbour and environs : a revision*, Chch, Whitcombe and Tombs, 1959, pp.69-70

[4] Ibid, p.46

[5] Ibid, pp.10-1

[6] Ibid, p.72

[7] Bagnall, Richard.Gordon. (comp. & edit.) *Survey of the proposed Belmont Regional Hill Park. Part one. Recommendations on development and management, Wgtn, Victoria University of Wellington, 1976*, p.30



The Te Atiawa Chief Te Puni with Pito-one pa in the background

[Heaphy], Charles 1820-1881 :[Epuni, London, Smith Elder1845] Alexander Turnbull Library, PUBL-0011-02-2

Away from the northern shores of Te Whanganui a Tara, and occupying the central and northern Heretaunga Valley, were Ngati Rangatahi, a Ngati Maniapoto hapu who occupied the central and northern Heretaunga valley area before the arrival of Europeans under the authority of Ngati Toa chiefs Te Rauparaha and Te Rangihaeata. With Ngati Toa hapu holding major areas of occupation along the Porirua Coast extending south to Ohariu and east to Heretaunga, the tracks from Porirua remained important. These tracks enabled Ngati Toa quick access into Heretaunga if Ngati Rangatahi provided early warning of any incursions from the Wairarapa peoples. The tracks were also said to be used during the 1830s by Ngati Rangatahi to convey their tribute of eels, wood or canoes to Ngati Toa at Porirua.[8]

(b) The Arrival of the New Zealand Company

In 1839, the New Zealand Company arrived in Wellington with plans of establishing a colony. With origins dating back to 1825, the Company was established to put into practice a theory of colonisation devised by Edward Gibbon Wakefield. [This theory is discussed more fully in the Resource Statement for the Battle-Hill Farm Park] A scheme to establish the town of Port Nicholson had been set out in a prospectus launched on 2 May 1839. Amid rumours that the British Government would soon intervene in New Zealand to seek sovereignty over the islands, the Company fitted out a ship named the *Tory* and their officials voyaged to New Zealand to buy land for their colonisation scheme. On 20 September 1839, the *Tory* sailed into Te Whanganui a Tara.[9] On 21 September, Edward Jermingham Wakefield visited Te Puni's village and noted that the Korokoro waterway, which he described as a "merry, brawling stream", flowed into the sea between the pa and the western hills.[10]

The arrival at Te Whanganui a Tara of New Zealand Company officials on the *Tory* was soon followed by negotiations with local Maori to acquire land for settlement. On 27 September 1839, the Port Nicholson Deed was signed with Te Puni and others from Pito-one being involved in

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[8] Waitangi Tribunal, op cit, pp.17-43

[9] Ibid, pp.45-8

[10] Wakefield, Edward Jermingham, *Adventure in New Zealand*, New York, De Capo Press, 1971 (reprint) pp.27-8

this land transaction. There were numerous difficulties with this attempt to purchase land, however. The deed was in English, the interpreter had only a basic grasp of te reo, the boundaries were so poorly recorded that they remain difficult to map, no plan of the land transaction was available during the negotiations and certain key groups of Wellington Maori did not sign. Despite these problems, and to ensure the widest possible support for their objectives, the New Zealand Company officials then sailed north to Kapiti Island, negotiated with Ngati Toa chiefs and signed another deed on 25 October this one purporting to have acquired an area extending from Taranaki to the top of the South Island. Following this, a further deed was signed with Te Atiawa at Queen Charlotte Sounds on 8 November for the same area of land as that noted in the Kapiti document. If the first Port Nicholson deed has since been regarded as sketchy in detail, these later two deeds were especially vague.[11]

Whilst in the Wellington area, the New Zealand Company officials undertook several journeys of exploration to surrounding districts. On 14 November 1839, Edward Jermingham Wakefield decided to journey from the Hutt Valley to Wanganui. He took the Kenepuru track through to Porirua Harbour and described what he saw.

> The usual farewell was shouted by the assembled Petone natives; and I started up a steep footpath beyond the Korokoro or 'Throat' stream.
>
> ...We ascended a steep hill, through extensive potato-gardens belonging to Tuarau; and from thence had a noble view of the harbour and the infant settlement. After a tedious march of two or three hours over very undulating ground on the top of the range, along a track constantly obstructed by webs of the kareao or supple-jack, we came to the brow of a descent, from which we had a view of a narrow wooded valley, and a peep of the sea in Cook's Strait over a low part of the further hills. On descending the hill, we found ourselves in a fine alluvial valley, through which a considerable stream brawled and cascaded.[12]

Wakefield had reached Kenepuru Stream and made his way down to Porirua Harbour.

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[11] Waitangi Tribunal, op cit, pp.52-59
[12] Wakefield, op cit, p.94

View of Pito-one that Wakefield and Crawford would have seen when on the Korokoro-Kenepuru Track
[Heaphy], Charles 1820-1881 :[Port Nicholson from the hills above Pitone in 1840 , [London, Smith Elder1845]
Alexander Tumbull Library, PUBL-0009

Another traveler in the area at around this time was James Coutts Crawford who had traveled from England to Sydney in 1838. In November 1839, he had sailed to New Zealand to explore trading opportunities and had been landed by the crew of the *Success* at Titahi Bay. After he had been some time in the area, he use the Korokoro track to travel across to Te Whanganui a Tara. Crawford described his trip from Porirua Harbour, up Kenepuru Stream, and over the summit before descending down to join the Korokoro Stream following it down to the harbour. Accompanying Crawford were unnamed Maori guides, Thomas Wilson and Hugh Sinclair.

> Passing Titahi Bay, and the pretty shores of Porirua, we entered the main bush and travelled up the stream, in a line with whose course the present road stretches. We crossed and re-crossed the stream about seventy times, until at length the path ascended and led us over the summit of the range overlooking the Korokoro. The whole distance traversed, with the exception of some few patches of cultivation at Porirua, was through dense and uncleared forest. When I looked down upon the broad waters of Whanganuiatera

> [sic], or Port Nicholson, I thought I had never seen a finer sheet of water anywhere, and we seated ourselves for a few minutes to enjoy the view. Bright sunshine gleamed, reflected from the waters, which were dotted with canoes engaged in fishing. The Hutt valley presented a dense forest of gigantic trees, and a large pa (village) was visible at Pitone [sic]. As we descended the hill, our advance was hindered by a mass of newly-felled forest, which was cleared and ready for burning off. Our escort now commenced firing guns to attract the attention of the fishermen; and as we descended the hill the canoes approached the shore, so that when we reached it, they were there to meet us.[13]

Crawford and his party met with the chiefs Te Puni and Wharepouri and joined them for dinner before they return by boat to Ngahauranga.

(c) The Processes of Colonisation

To trace how the land currently within the Regional Park came into the possession of the agencies that now hold it requires a description of the many processes that occurred which saw the land pass from Maori to Crown ownership, to private Pakeha ownership to return again to being Crown and public land. The following narrative, charts the complexity of how the land passed out of possession of the various Maori groups who held the land.

Soon after the Company's arrival, Crown officials landed in New Zealand and, on 6 February 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed. One of the first actions of the new Government was to set up a Commission of Inquiry to generally inquire into all the many hundreds of land transactions between Europeans and Maori that had allegedly occurred prior to 1840. If these were found to be valid, then they would be ratified by the Crown and a title awarded. During the hearings into the New Zealand Company's transactions for the Wellington district, however, the evidence revealed that local Maori who had been involved had varying views towards the transactions. Te Puni of Te Atiawa, informed the Commission that not all of his people were satisfied with the transaction. Wi Tako, also of Te Atiawa, testified of his belief that the goods

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[13] Crawford, James Coutts, *Recollections of travel in New Zealand and Australia*, London : Trubner, 1880, pp27-9

received were merely payments by the Company for anchorage rights. Of Ngati Toa, Te Rauparaha expressed his belief that the deed he signed related only to a piece of land on the northwest coast of the South Island whilst Te Rangihaeata thought it related to his interests in Wakatu (present-day Nelson). This testimony was given before the Commission in 1842. The Commissioner, William Spain, having heard this testimony, expressed his view in a preliminary report of 12 September 1843, that there were serious difficulties in the way of seeing the New Zealand Company's 1839 land transactions as being valid. Despite these findings, a major difficulty existed. On 21 January 1840, the first ships carrying the first Company migrants had arrived in Wellington and since then hundreds of colonists had settled in the town and countryside on the harbour's southern shores. Any finding that the Company's claims had no validity would have major ramifications for these settlers.[14]

Whilst the Spain Commission was proceeding, the planning of the colony at Wellington continued. Although surveying had begun around the Port Nicholson township, it was gradually extended out to the surrounding environs such as the Hutt Valley. By 1 April 1843, Chief Surveyor Samuel Brees reported to Principal Agent William Wakefield that Tiffen, one of his surveying staff, was at work in an area that was generally called the Horokiwi district and that he was also setting out the Horokiwi Road.[15] Although almost all of the land currently within the Belmont Regional Park was not surveyed through this process, a small area of the Horokiri sections just to the northeast of Mt. Magee were eventually included in the parkland.

Despite the Company officials continuing with settlement plans, problems were growing with local Maori. [The events from 1843 to 1846 are discussed more fully in the Resource Statement for the Battle-Hill Farm Park.] Several groups were finding settlers encroaching onto land that had not been considered as having been included in the 1839 purchase. With Commissioner Spain reaching a view that this purchase did indeed have problems a compromise was sought which entailed getting the various groups of Port Nicholson Maori to signs 'deed of release' giving up all their interests in Wellington, for a further payment and the granting of reserves. Recent evaluations of this arbitration process, which took place in February and March 1844,

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[14] Waitangi Tribunal, op cit, pp.60-65 and 199

[15] Brees to Wakefield, 1 Apr 1843, NZC 135/3, Micro Z 5355, Arch NZ, Wgtn.

have found that it proceeded in a coercive manner.[16] Not surprisingly, several groups, such as Porirua Ngati Toa, initially refused to participate in the arbitration. In addition, in Heretaunga, Ngati Rangatahi and Ngati Tama (with support from Ngati Toa chiefs such as Te Rangihaeata) refused to give up their occupation of Heretaunga. This protest infuriated Crown and Company officials as they believed the Hutt Valley had already been purchased.[17] Although negotiations continued, and Ngati Toa chiefs eventually accepted the arbitration, the protest occupation of Heretaunga remained. In response, the colonists built stockades and forts in the Valley and elsewhere and troop reinforcements were sent to Wellington but Governor FitzRoy refused to take further action. By November 1845, however, FitzRoy had been recalled by the British Government. His replacement, George Grey, had in his mind other ways of dealing with the Hutt situation. In February 1846, the new Governor visited the area and negotiated, under the threat of arms, a withdrawal by Maori from the area.

By 17 February, Ngati Tama had departed leaving only Ngati Rangatahi in position. On 25 February, Ngati Rangatahi also left Heretaunga. Things then went wrong as settlers plundered Rangatahi houses and desecrated their chapel. Two days later, troops burnt down the pa including the chapel and the fences around the urupa.[18] Ngati Rangatahi responded by returning to the Hutt, plundering settler houses and skirmishing with British soldiers. Although Ngati Rangatahi withdrew from the Hutt, and it appeared that tensions were lessening, matters soon escalated again, however, when two Maori accused of plundering settler goods in the Valley were put on trial in late March. On 2 April, two of the settlers who had remained in the Hutt were killed. On 16 May, Boulcott's farm, which was being used as a military outpost, was attacked and six British soldiers killed. Although the attack involved Whanganui Maori who had Ngati Rangatahi affiliations, Te Rangihaeata's men were implicated with being involved. Plans were laid to attack the chief's pa located at Pauatahanui.[19]

On 30th July, a party of militia and police, as well as 160 Te Atiawa under the chiefs Te Puni and Wi Tako, set off from the Hutt to converge on Te Rangihaeata's pa. The contingent of militia

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[16] Waitangi Tribunal, op cit, pp.145-179
[17] Ibid, pp.195-200
[18] Ibid, pp.210-12
[19] Ibid, pp.214-216.

was under the command of Mr. Donagh and William Bertram White, the police under A.C. Strode and the "friendly natives" were said to be under the command of David Scot. The route they took was the old Maori track to Pauatahanui that runs through the Belmont Regional Park. Of this journey, White was later to write: "That was a terrible march, three days in the rain through the bush."[20] Scot also kept a journal of the trip. On 31 July he wrote:

> ...proceeded on the mountain road towards Porirua (or as it is called by the natives Pariraho). It rained heavily during the day; at about 3 pm the party arrived at a convenient spot for camping about half way which the natives decided on as being best calculated to conceal our approach to the rebels to which Captain McDonogh reluctantly consented to, being anxious to push on. Temporary houses were soon erected for the whole party which in some measure sheltered them from the rain which continued heavily at night.[21]

On the next day, 1 August, the party continued onwards along the track as Scot recorded:

> At daylight proceeded in the same order, Captain McDonogh leading the advance guard of Natives accompanied by myself, Mr White leading the Militia, Mr Strode the Police and Mr Swainson the rear party of Natives; the road continued very hilly and fatiguing, and notwithstanding the men were heavily loaded, they advanced cheerfully at a smart pace untill [sic] descended into flat timbered land at the head of the north branch of the Porirua Harbour at about 11 am and where we supposed the rebels' Pa was situated.[22]

When the Hutt force reached the pa, they found it recently abandoned. They occupied the site and established a base. The party then intended to set off after Te Rangihaeata, who had headed towards the Horokiri Valley. [The account of a battle fought within the Horokiri Valley is detailed in the Resource Statement for the Battle-Hill Farm Park.]

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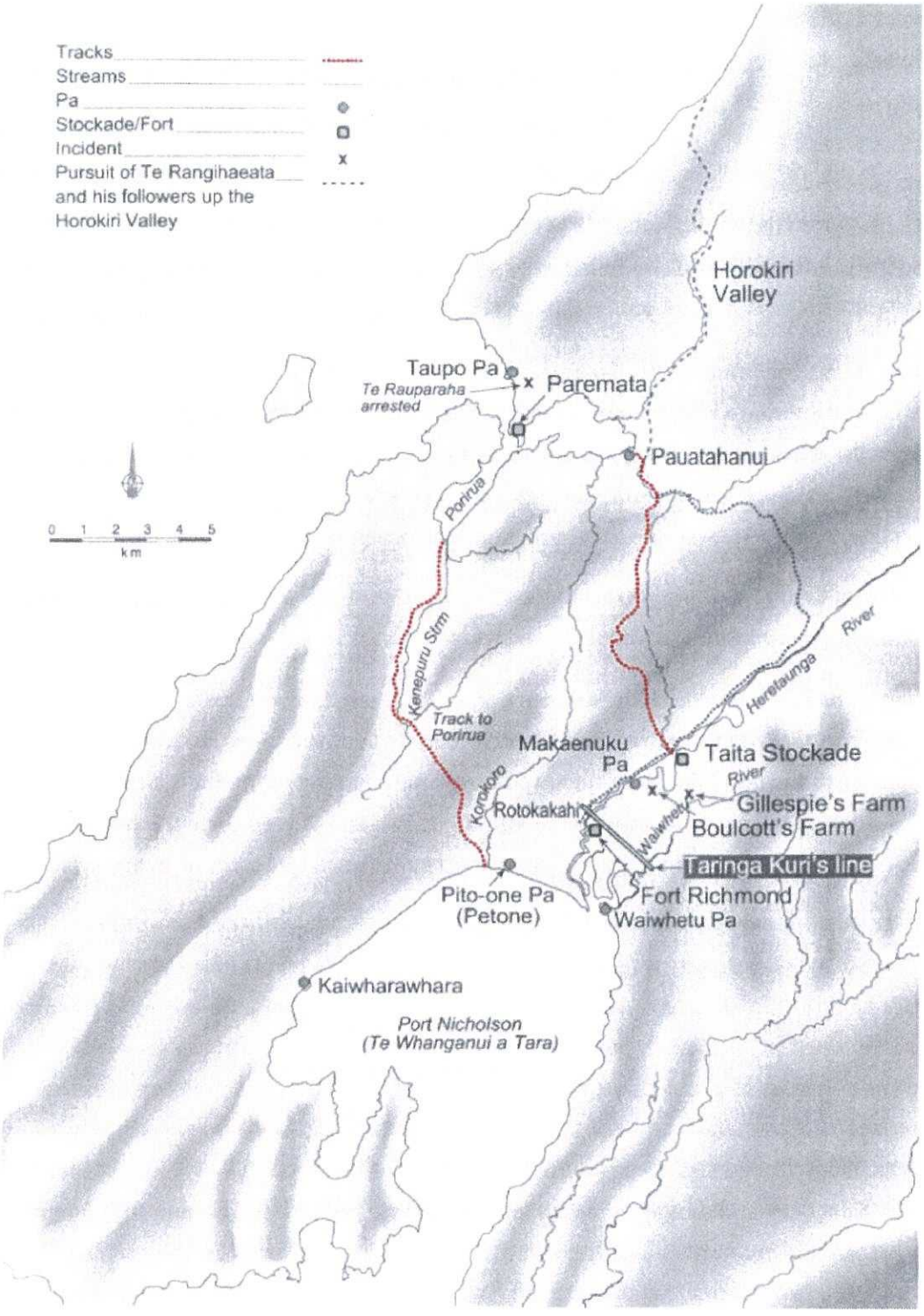
[20] White, William Bertram "Highlights in the life of William Bertram White" , MS-Papers-4542, Alexander Turnball Library, Wgtn, p.21

[21] Scot, David "Journal of expedition against rebel natives in 1846", MS-Papers-5574, Alexander Turnball Library, Wgtn

[22] Ibid



Map showing features related to the 1846 conflicts with the Maori tracks highlighted:
Adapted from Map 7 of Waitangi Tribunal's *Te Whanganui a Tara me one Takiwa* report

Up to this point, much of the land that is currently within the Belmont Regional Park had not officially passed into European ownership. This then occurred through two processes. The first was the settlement of the New Zealand Company's claim to Port Nicholson. Following the completion of the arbitration process on 1844, Commissioner Spain issued his final report for the Port Nicholson claim in March 1845 recommending that the Company receive a Crown Grant for 71,900 acres of land which effectively equated with the sections that had been surveyed for settlement up to that time. This Grant was issued by Governor FitzRoy in July 1845. For the New Zealand Company, however, a major problem had not been dealt with. Several of the sections which had been surveyed during the settlement process had ignored the presence of various Maori cultivations on the land. In other cases, cultivations had been extended onto surveyed land which had not been occupied by settlers after 1839. Company officials, therefore, wanted to claim this survey land as part of their award from the Crown but did not have a way of dealing with Maori claims.

The Crown appointed an army officer, Colonel W.A. McCleverty, to make inquiries and he devised a system where exchanges would be arranged with Maori being required to give up their cultivations on surveyed land for which they would be given land in exchange as compensation. A long process of investigation took place. By 1847 a series of deeds of exchange were signed by those Maori groups affected. However, recent evaluation of this process has found a number of problems existed. It has been noted that a degree of pressure was placed on Maori to accept the exchanges. Secondly, the land that was given was often of poorer quality than that which was taken. And finally, Maori were often given land from the Wellington Tenths (a collection of endowment reserves in which Maori already had interests) or were given land from the unsurveyed areas of Wellington. As these areas were outside of the proposed Company Grant, this land still belonged to Maori. Therefore, Maori were being compensated in land that was already theirs.[23]

One of the groups involved in McCleverty's process, were Pito-one Te Atiawa. McCleverty found that 61 acres of settler land in the Hutt had been cultivated on by Pito-one Maori.

[23] Waitangi Tribunal, op cit, pp.227-278

Following his investigations, McCleverty recommended that one of the areas Pito-one Maori should be given in exchange for their Hutt cultivation land was a 1,214 block called the Korokoro or Maungaraki reserve. This land came from out of the unsurveyed areas outside of the proposed Company Grant. Most of this reserve was located in what is currently the Belmont Regional Park. Although this seems a large amount of land to be given in exchange, the Hutt land that was being given up was good quality land, whereas McCleverty himself noted that although Korokoro and other reserves given "may appear large in extent, but in reality they possess little land available for cultivation". Korokoro was located fairly close to the Pito-one pa and already had cultivations of Pito-one Maori located on the site. However, most of the land was of little quality for farming. Many years later, the land was described as being generally of a "steep and broken" nature. It was noted that there was only "very poor soil right through" being only half an inch to an inch in depth.[24]

Following the completion of McCleverty's processes, the giving up of cultivation land and the granting of new reserves, a new Crown Grant was drawn up by Governor Grey and was awarded the New Zealand Company. However, rather than being based on the surveyed land, as recommended by William Spain, Grey's grant covered the whole of the original block claimed by the New Zealand Company. Therefore, instead of receiving almost 70,000 acres as Spain had recommended after investigating the Company's claim and determining that this was the extent of land that had been paid for, the Company was granted all 209,247 acres of their original claim. This extended Grant included much of the hill lands around Wellington and the Hutt and includes the lands currently in the Belmont Regional Park that are located on the western Hutt hills. When the New Zealand Company collapsed from financial ruin in 1850, that land became Crown land.

The remainder of the land that is today within the Regional Park around Pauatahanui and extending south to the hills behind Porirua became Crown land through another land acquisition process which was aimed at Ngati Toa. As noted above, in August 1846, the Crown had fought with Te Rangihaeata over his supposed involvement in the Hutt disturbances. Following the abandonment of his pa at Pauatahanui, the chief made a stand in the Horokiri Valley at a place

[24] Minutes of the Native Land Court, Wellington Minute Book 17, pp314-324

now named Battle Hill. After a short three day battle, he abandoned this position and headed north. Although pursued he was not caught. Safely in Ngati Raukawa territory, Te Rangihaeata ensconced himself at Poroutawhao, a swamp pa belonging to Ngati Huia of Ngati Raukawa of which Te Rangihaeata was also a chief. Governor Grey took no further action to dislodge him. With the fighting over Te Rangihaeata remained at Poroutawhao.

In the meantime, Grey had also implemented another course of action involving Te Rauparaha. Although the chief had actively kept out of events occurring in the Hutt, Grey decided it would satisfy public pressure and strike a blow at Ngati Toa power to kidnap Te Rauparaha. On 23 July 1846, a night raid by soldiers and militia on Taupo pa at Porirua resulted in the capture of Te Rauparaha and six others. Without being charged or committed to trial, the Ngati Toa chiefs were taken to Auckland and held there for 18 months.[25]

With Te Rauparaha removed to Auckland, and Te Rangihaeata in exile in the Manawatu, leadership of Ngati Toa fell to three younger chiefs, Matene Te Whiwhi, Tamihana Te Rauparaha and Rawiri Puaha. To complete his objectives of pacification Grey set his sights on acquiring Ngati Toa's remaining lands at the Wairau Valley in Marlborough and at Porirua. On 18 March 1847, the Crown purchased the 608,000-acre Wairau block the deed being signed by Rawiri Puaha, Matene Te Whiwhi and Tamihana Te Rauparaha. Two weeks later, the Porirua purchase was completed on 1 April, with the Crown acquiring most of Ngati Toa's land from Ohariu to Paekakariki. Included within the 1847 Porirua purchase was much of the land now in the western half of the Belmont Regional Park.

Evidence is available that the negotiations for these land transactions took place within a pressured context of discussions over Te Rauparaha's continuing imprisonment and other matters.[26] For Grey, the purchases were part of a wider strategy to end Ngati Toa military power. As he later wrote to his superiors in London, he believed that the acquisition of

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[25] Boast, Richard "Ngati Toa and the Upper South Island: A report to the Waitangi Tribunal", WAI-785 #A86, Sept 1999/Mar2000, Vol.1 pp.220-229

[26] Boast, op cit.

Ngati Toa land "will give us an almost unlimited influence over a powerful and hitherto a very treacherous and dangerous tribe." With the acquisition of the iwi's land, Grey had pacified the Wellington district.

Although the processes described above explain how the land within the Park became Crown land, several further steps occurred before the land came into the Regional Park land and these are described below.

(d) The Belmont to Pauatahanui Road

Just as the Belmont tracks had been important as a means of communication to Maori, so they remained for the first Pakeha settlers. By 1848, the beginning of the path to Porirua that began from Korokoro stream, was described as follows:

> At this point, a native foot-path winds up the western hills towards Porirua, a neighbouring harbour.... From a deep dell between two ridges of these hills, a brawling stream called the Korokoro, or "Throat", rushes into the sea. This water-course is well adapted for turning a millwheel.[27]

However, it appears that little European settlement occurred in the area now covered by the Regional Park until the era of the Wellington Provincial Government. In 1857, surveyor Albert Beetham was contracted to lay out the Pauatahanui Small Farm settlement. As part of his work, he cut a straight line over the ridge and down through to Korokoro. Soon after, along the southern end of the cut which had become known as "Beetham's Line", settlers McEwen, Galloway, Wallace and Welch took up sections which stretched across from Korokoro stream to current-day Stratton Road and through to the old hill road.[28]

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[27] Wakefield, Edward Jermingham, *The Handbook for New Zealand*, London, John W. Parker, 1848, p.100

[28] Bagnall, op cit, p.30. Also McLennan, Rosemary *Glimpses into early Normandale*, Hutt, Normandale Progressive Association, c1993, pp.3-4

Following this initial settlement, a series of 50 smaller sections were surveyed in the 1860s, but these were found difficult to farm in the environment of the Belmont hillsides. By the 1870s, many of the original settlers, such as David McEwen, T. and H. Sanson and the Ellerm family had walked off the land to take up new sections in the Manawatu.[29] Before then, however, these families had sought to open up their district. With the arrival of the first European settlers began a long campaign to have the Belmont bridle track made into a permanent and serviceable road. From an early period, putting a road from Belmont through to Pauatahanui was considered a priority and work at the Belmont end began under the Western Hutt Highway District Road Board. It appears that in the first instance, the settlers themselves began to build the road from their own funds and resources. After persisting with this for some time, they turned to the authorities for funding assistance. On 20th April 1858, a petition of 23 settlers was presented to the newly-established Wellington Provincial Council "praying for assistance to make a road."[30] The petition was referred to a select committee of the Council which reported on 21st May.

> Your Committee having considered the evidence submitted to them in support of the petition of the Western Hutt Settlers, and having referred to the course pursued by the Council in parallel cases, are of opinion that the line of Road proposed and partly executed by the petitioners, will be one of considerable advantage to the public generally, and for many years will probably be the main road from the Hutt and Wairarapa to Pahautanui [sic] and the West Coast, being about fourteen miles shorter than the present road.
>
> That there is a large quantity of Government Land on both sides of this road, which would be very speedily sold if this work is carried out, as is evident from the fact that the result of making the Bridle track so far as it has already gone, has been to sell sufficient Land to double the amount of rate at 1s. per acre. That the Settlers in the District have already contributed 2s. per acre, and a third annual rate of 1s. is now being levied. The Committee, therefore, recommend that an amount equal to two-thirds of the estimated cost of £600 should be appropriated to carry out the objects of the Petitioners.[31]

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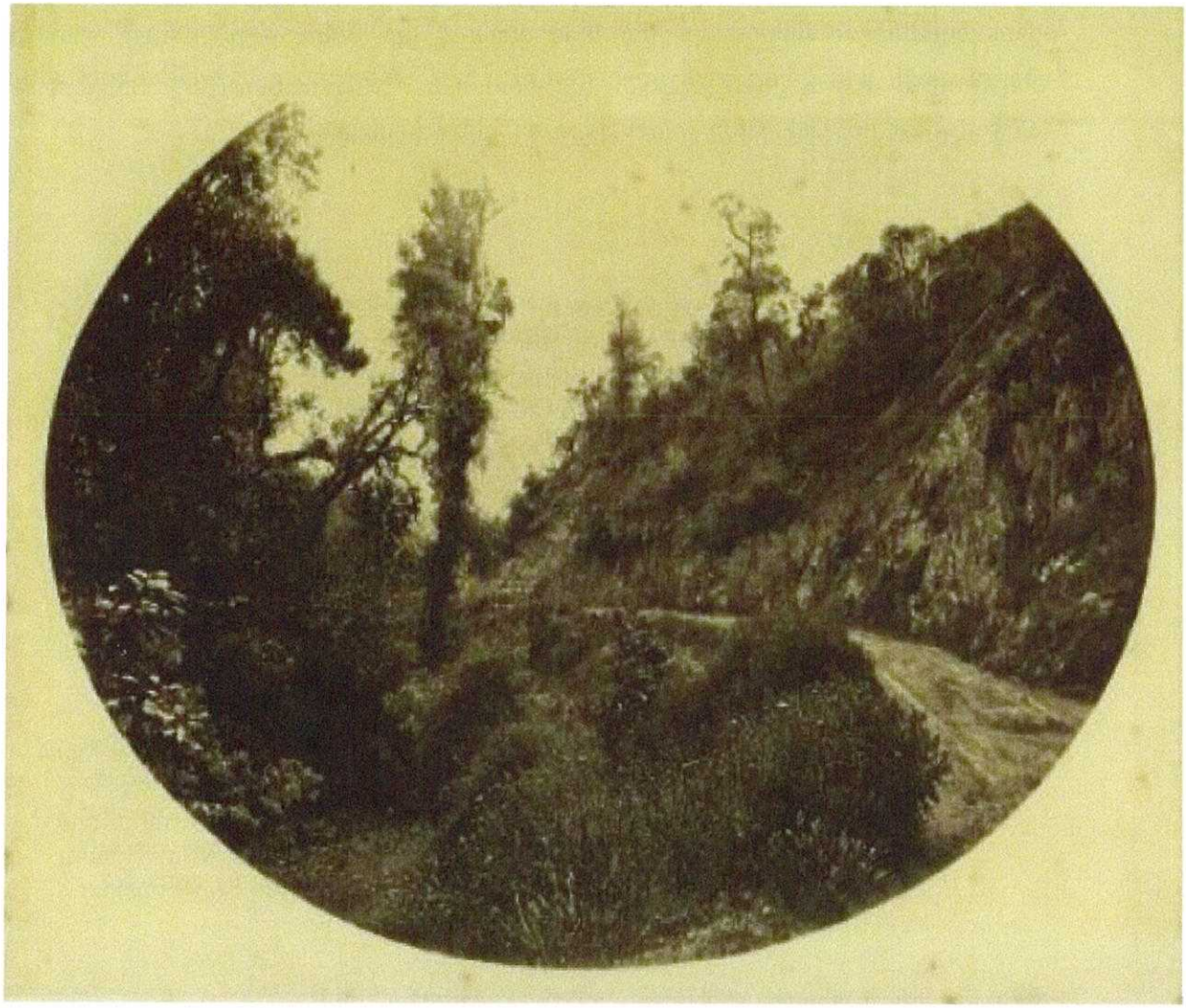
[29] Ibid, p.4

[30] Votes and Proceedings of the Wellington Provincial Council, 1858, Presented Petitions.

[31] Votes and Proceedings of the Wellington Provincial Council, 1858, Report of the Western Hut Road

Having received this report, the Superintendent of Wellington, Isaac Featherston, wrote to the petitioners agreeing to their request.



A Section of the Completed Belmont-Pauatahanui Road, 1870:
Alexander Turnbull Library, PA Coll-1574-17

However, delays were experienced and nothing occurred over the next fifteen months. The following year, as part of his 30th August 1859 opening address to the second session of the second Provincial Council, Featherston noted that if the council agreed to his budgetary proposals for the year, which included selling reclaimed land and raising a substantial loan, a

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Committee.

number of public works could go ahead including the conversion of the Belmont bridle track into a dray road.[32]

This conditional support for the road angered the Belmont petitioners who felt that the Superintendent was going back on his word. On 7th November 1859, Belmont settler David McEwen wrote to Featherston on behalf of his fellow local settlers.

> Sir,
>
> I, at the request of a good many of the settlers in this district, beg to draw your Honour's attention to the following parts. In April 1858 the settlers in this district forwarded a memorial requesting your Honour to place on the estimates a sum sufficient to convert the then Belmont Bridle Path consisting of about 114 chains into a cart road. Your Honour in reply stated unconditionally that you were prepared to do so but on references to your speech on opening the present session of the Provincial Council your Honour stated that you would make provision for the said work only if the Council would agree to sanction a loan of £25,000. This statement does not look well for our interests and I have therefore to put you in mind of your promise in reply to our memorial...
>
> ...We expect something to be done this session as we consider that the exertions we have made in making the Bridle Path, now nearly four miles, is certainly in our favour and we daily feel more and more the want of a cart road. I hope therefore that your Honour will be pleased to place on the estimates what you may consider a sufficient sum to make the cart road.[33]

Following this, it appears that agreement was made for the road to go ahead, although several letters from McEwen during mid-1860 reflects his growing impatience with Provincial engineering staff as to the progress being made. [34]

With the cart road sufficiently advanced, McEwen began efforts to have the road further improved. On 12th November 1862, after several efforts to have the engineer visit the district to lay out proposed extensions to the road, McEwen wrote to the Superintendent asking that he

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[32] Votes and Proceedings of the Wellington Provincial Council, 1859, p.8
[33] McEwen to Featherston, 7 Nov 1859, WP3 1859/480, Box 7, Arch. NZ, Wgtn

instruct the Engineer to come or to give McEwen authority to begin the work himself. McEwen wearily added: "up to the present time I have received no reply. I do not complain of this as uncourteous to myself as I am perfectly used to such neglect or contempt (either word will suit my purpose) by the Officials of the Wellington Provincial Government."[35]

The progress on the road remained slow. When, in January 1863, James Coutts Crawford returned to Wellington from Wanganui, instead of traveling on the uncompleted road, he journeyed along the cutting made by Beetham's line and later briefly described his journey.

> On my return to Wellington I walked through from Pauatahanui to the Hutt by what is called Beetham's line. It is a line taken for the greater part straight, like a Roman road, consequently forms a constant ascent and descent and is a most fatiguing walk.[36]

The Belmont-Pauatahanui road was not completed, however, until July 1872 under the Belmont Highway Board. By the end of the Provincial period (c.1875), the road had been widened to take wheeled traffic.[37] The road did not completely follow the old Maori track from Pauatahanui but turned down the hill through present day Normandale to join up with a bridge that had been built over the Hutt River.[38] Eventually a branch road was run down to Korokoro which the settlers used to bring up firewood from the bush that bordered the stream.[39] There has apparently been debate on whether coaches were ever used on this road with the recollections of local residents being adamant that this did occur.[40] By the mid-1880s, however, and the formation of the Haywards road, the Belmont-Pauatahanui Road fell into disuse as a route linking the Hutt Valley and Pauatahanui.[41]

(e) Continued European Settlement

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[34] See WP3 1860/447, 1860/459, 1860/467 and 1860/542, Box 8, Arch. NZ, Wgtn
[35] See WP3 1862/524 and McEwen to Featherston, 12 Nov 1862, WP3 1862/530, Box 11, Arch. NZ, Wgtn
[36] Crawford, op cit, pp27-9
[37] Bagnall, op cit, pp.30-1
[38] McLennan, op cit, p.1
[39] Ibid, p.27
[40] McLennan, op cit, p.4
[41] Bagnall, op cit, pp.30-1

As European settlement progressed, sawmills were set up in the vicinity of the land which is now included in the Regional Park. In 1859, the Carter and Hurly sawmill was erected on Thomas Stace's property and in 1863 another sawmill was built on Francis Bradey's property at Duck Creek. Recollections of the Hutt Valley from the 1860s, note that the forests of the Belmont hills were being felled on one side of the Valley whilst the bush of the Wainuiomata Hills was being cleared on the other side. The land was then burnt off. Sometimes bush fires resulted. The valley would be covered in ash and burnt leaves and settlers had to be vigilant that their shingle roofs did not catch fire.[42]

From the 1870s, the land tenure of many of the sections that would later be included within the Belmont Park began to change. William Fitzherbert, Member of Parliament for the Hutt from 1858 to 1879, had owned land on the floor of the Hutt Valley since 1864. During the 1870s, he began to acquire western hillside land as he extended his property to form the Western Hutt sheep station. Although many of his purchases included land now covered by the suburbs of Korokoro, Maungaraki and Normandale, Fitzherbert also acquired some of the sections now included within the Regional Park including Section 301 from the Golder family in 1877, Section 424 from James Buick in 1879, and Section 423 from James McKenzie in 1883. Thomas Stratton became the farm manager of the continually increasing Western Hutt sheep station.[43]

In addition to farming occupation of the land, the mouth of the Korokoro Stream was long the site of mills which used the waterway as a power source for processing and driving machinery. Therefore, by the 1880s the stream had been dammed to provide a sufficient water quantity. In 1885, the Wellington Woollen Manufacturing Company was formed and took over the site at the mouth of the Korokoro Stream where a new mill complex was built. The mill commenced manufacture in June 1886 and employed up to 200 workers. It was an all-purpose woollen mill making flannels, tweeds, knitting yarn and hosiery.[44] The mill remained opened until 1968 when changes in the marketplace meant that the operation was no longer viable. After the closure of

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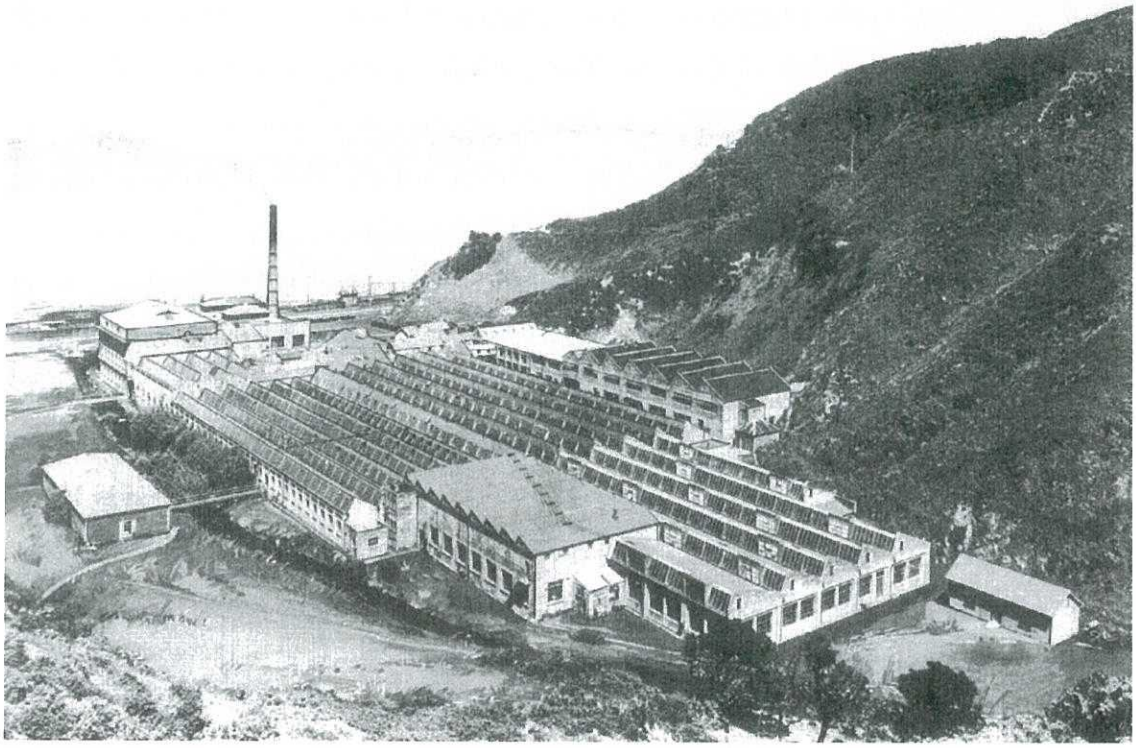
[42] McGill, David *Lower Hutt : the first garden city*, Lower Hutt, Lower Hutt City Council, 1991, p.12
[43] McLennan, op cit, p.4
[44] Butterworth, Susan Margaret *Petone : a history*, Petone, Petone Borough Council, 1988, pp.110 & 112

the mill, the buildings were demolished in 1970 with only the marble wall at the front of the site, originally built in 1920, remaining in place.[45]



The Wellington Woollen Maunfacturing Company mill showing the Korokoro Stream running alongside
Petone Public Library

In the meantime, by the end of the nineteenth century, the situation on the western hills had changed as farming gave way to housing. In 1890, a year before his death, Fitzherbert transferred most of this land to his sons William Alfred and Henry Samuel. The following year, Henry transferred his interests over to his brother who had also become the first Mayor of the newly-formed Lower Hutt borough. William Alfred Fitzherbert continued to buy western hillside land much of which is now within the Regional Park. This includes Section 321 from Charles Cottle in 1897 and Sections 308 and 319 from Alfred Belmont Cottle in 1899. By this time, the western hills were beginning to be seen as being suitable for housing purposes. In 1900, the hill subdivision of Korokoro was opened and the following year, the Maungaraki subdivision was

[45] Ibid, pp.121-2

established.[46] In 1903, much of the Fitzherbert Western Hutt estate (1,623 acres) was sold to the Crown for £15,419 pounds, the plan being to establish suburban housing and small farms.[47]

In June 1903, Lands Department official Thomas P Allen, filed a report on the land intended to be included in the new subdivision. The northern land Sections Nos.40-43 (which eventually would be included within the Regional Park), was described as being: "high, hilly land and much broken by spurs and deep gullies. The soil is open and rubbly, subject to slipping... from my experience should advise large holdings.... As the country is only suitable for pastoral purposes and would not carry sufficient stock to make a living on smaller holdings." Allen noted that along the Belmont road gorse was beginning to get a hold and fencing was not in a good shape although the road itself was in a fair condition. The northern sections were said to be well watered, although some concern was noted that ragwort had made an appearance on Section 40.[48]

The southern Normandale sections, which were available on 999-year lease, were gradually taken up although the area soon came to be called the 'Heartbreak Settlement' on account of the harshness of conditions and the marginal quality of land for farming. The larger farming sections Nos.40-43 were not taken up until after the First World War when William Inglis Ward leased all 857 acres under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act. His lease was from 26 October 1910 for 33 years with a perpetual right of renewal for further 33-year terms.[49]

For those who continued to farm the hills, the difficulties of making a living remained. Local farmer T.W. Caverhill noted in 1911 that overall the soil was light "and the cleared land gets burned up in summer." W.A. Cottle believed that the soil was somewhat better on the hill tops, than on the hillsides. He ran cattle over the land. He had also tried sheep but these were harried by dogs.[50]

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[46] Committee of Petone citizens (comp) *Petone (Pito-one) : first 100 years 1840-1940 : progress & prosperity : history and traditions from farms to factories*, Wellington, Petone Borough Council, 1940, p.100

[47] McLennan, op cit, pp.4-5

[48] Ibid, p.29

[49] Ibid, pp.27 and 142-3

[50] Minutes of the Native Land Court, Wellington Minute Book 17, pp314-324

Although as at 1900 most the Belmont Park's land was still privately owned, it was not intensively occupied and it appears that informal public use of the land soon began. Before the establishment of the Park, limited walking tracks crossed the land.[51] Areas within the park were used for camping and it was noted that shooting of rabbits, hares and possums was popular.[52] The Korokoro Dam site for a long time back was a site for picnicking. Although swimming was not allowed in the dam, young children would do so if they did not get caught. Stories are remembered of these escapades and on one occasion a group of boys who were skinny dipping in the dam had their clothes taken by the ranger responsible for the Borough waterworks.[53]

Members of Tararua Tramping Club and Hutt Valley Tramping Club at Belmont Trig, 4 December 1927
Alexander Turnbull Library, PA1-o=650-01-2

[51] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.2
[52] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.3
[53] McLennan, op cit, Introduction

(f) The Petone Water Supply

Aside from driving the woollen mill, from the beginning of the twentieth century, the Korokoro stream would also play a major role in supplying water to the township of Petone. Through until the end of the nineteenth century, Petone's water-supply came from artesian wells but the difficulty was that there was no high pressure water source to be used for the purposes of fire fighting. Initially, in 1899, the mayors of Lower Hutt and Petone inspected the Belmont or Speedy Stream with an eye to establishing a joint scheme. When the Hutt Council pulled out of this venture, the Petone councilors began to consider a closer water supply based on the Korokoro stream. Consideration of the merits between the two possible sites continued for some time. By February 1902, however, the Petone Borough Council opted for a scheme based on Belmont Stream.[54] This decision was made despite a Borough Engineer's report in favour of Korokoro Stream.

> The Korokoro watershed above the proposed reservoir will embrace a considerable area of virgin bush, which if conserved will guarantee a steady and clean inflow. About 100 acres or less may be set aside as sufficient for this purpose if taken in the most advantageous position. The quality of the Korokoro water is soft and palatable and it may be considered superior to that of the Belmont stream...[55]

The Engineer noted that the Korokoro option would provide enough water to supply 15,000 persons once a dam was built, whereas the Belmont stream would only supply 10,000 persons. The Korokoro stream would give better water pressure. Compared with this, Belmont stream in wet weather "fouls rapidly and becomes unsuitable for household purposes." Nevertheless, the Mayor and Councillors were concerned over the woolen mill having possible claims of riparian rights on the Korokoro Stream which would complicate matters enormously. Therefore, the decision was made to devise a scheme based on Belmont or Speedy's Stream.

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[54] Committee of Petone citizens, op cit, pp.68-70

[55] 4 February 1902, *The Evening Post,* "Petone's Water Supply"

When the Petone Borough Council sought to buy the water rights of Belmont Stream, it was found that the Hutt Council had gone ahead and already taken this action. Although the Hutt Council offered to discuss matters, the overture was refused. The focus returned to the Korokoro stream but the difficulty which existed here was the location of the woollen mills and the possibility that the mill owners could successfully claim riparian rights over the stream. Investigation into this problem somewhat held matters up until a major fire and destruction of several commercial buildings occurred in Petone in June 1901 and intensified public agitation for a high-pressure water supply. Negotiations therefore began with the mill's owners who proposed that if the Borough Council would build a lower reservoir for the exclusive use of the mill and would guarantee a certain flow into that reservoir, then the Company would raise no objection to the water supply scheme. Although a number of councillors were against any such arrangement, the majority supported the compromise and passed a resolution to this effect. Despite this, a bitter dispute arose within the Council with Mayor G.T. London refusing to sign a deed of agreement within the woollen company and therefore going against the resolution that been formally passed. In response, five outraged councillors resigned in protest and the issue of the water supply became a major issue in the ensuing election. Nevertheless, a complete victory was achieved by the Mayor and his supporters over their position of refusing to accept any terms from the Company. However, the Company had begun an action to have its riparian rights recognised and the terms of agreement with the Council honoured. Although the Council had a certain period of time to file a response, as fate would have it, an oversight by Council officials meant that the date of reply passed without the Council filing. The Woollen Company could now proscribe terms and the Council had to conform.[56] Following some years of wrangling, matters were finally settled under the Petone Corporation Waterworks Act of 1905. Therefore the Scheme went ahead and a ceremony was held on 25 April 1903 marking the beginning of construction.[57] Within a year, the scheme was completed. In 1907, improvements were made when an underground settling tank was built to allow sediment in the stream water to drop to the bottom allowing cleaner water to flow into the water supply.[58]

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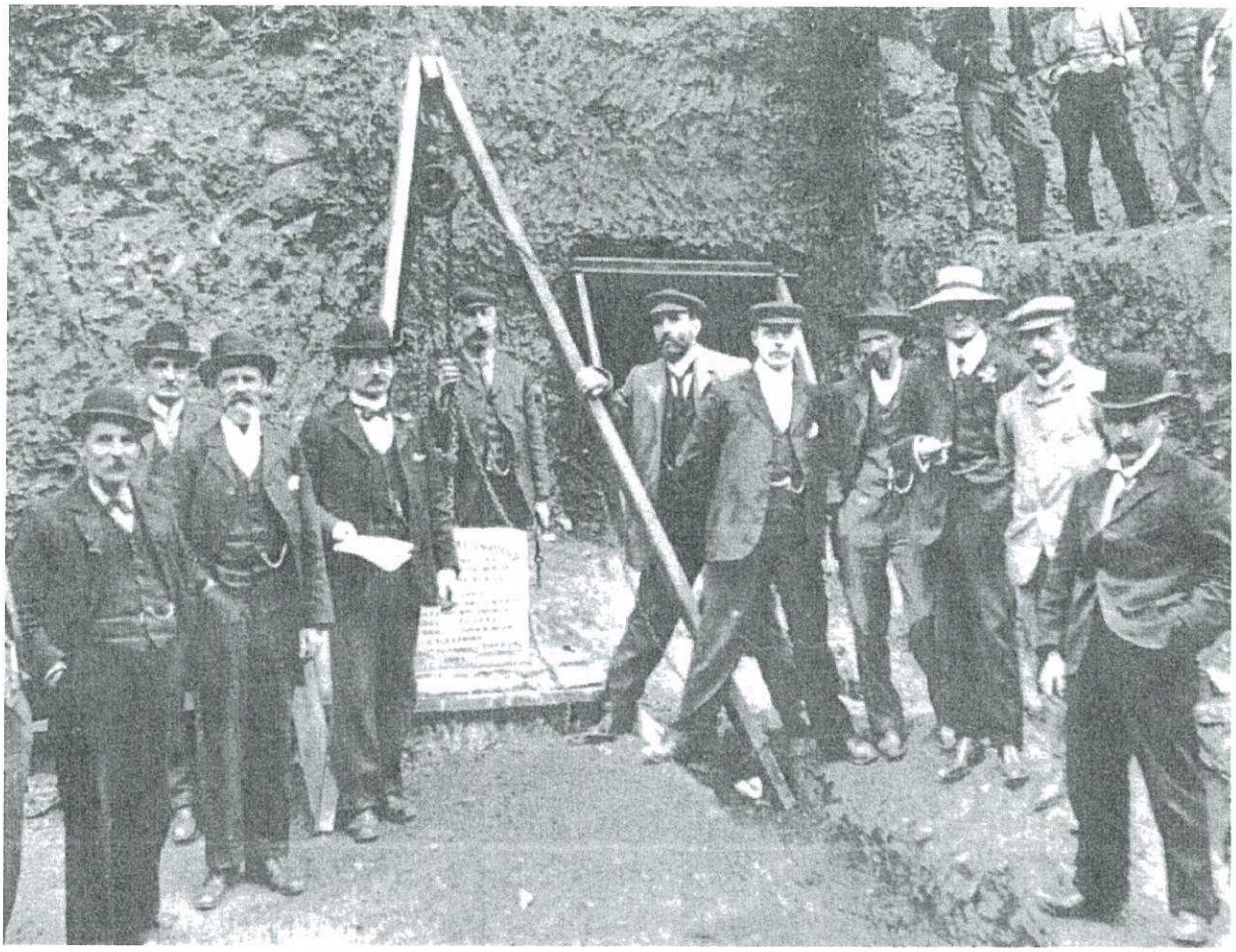
[56] Committee of Petone citizens, op cit, pp.68-70
[57] Butterworth, op cit, pp.132-3
[58] Ibid, p.133



Ceremony marking beginning of construction of the Petone Waterworks Scheme, 25 April 1903
Petone Public Library

A caretaker, J.C. Davis, was appointed to look after the newly-established water supply. In 1911, he wrote complaining of his onerous duties.

> Through the winter I have to work from 90 to 100 hours a week. I have to leave home at all hours of the night in stormy weather and walk about two miles along a track where limbs of trees and boulders are flying all around me and I don't know what minute I may be struck with one. When I get there, I have to stand by in the storm till morning. I also have the fire alarm to look after, which, when I leave home at night, Mrs Davis has to watch and if necessary go down into the gully at any hour in the night to turn on the pressure. Mrs Davis is also employed the whole of the week with no time off while I am away working. Since the Council has

> taken over the bush at Normandale I have about 100 acres over which I act as ranger on holidays and Sunday mornings to keep visitors from burning the bush and stop the settlers from falling the same.[59]

The bringing in of the water supply scheme was not always effective, however. The woollen company's control of the water scheme, through its negotiated agreement that it be supplied with a certain amount of water, meant that in dry seasons the Council had to honour the agreement and release water from the upper reservoir into the Company's lower reservoir with the result that borough residents were sometimes without water.[60] In addition, by the end of the 1920s, with the increasing size of the Petone Borough and more houses and buildings, the water pressure available to each residence began to drop away to a point where once again it was not high enough for fire-fighting. The possibility of raising the height of the Korokoro dam was considered but found to be an expensive option. Another possibility was to use artesian water, but, from a health perspective, this water was considered less desirable than getting the supply from a running stream. For a while the acquiring of water rights over the Whakataki Stream in Upper Hutt was considered as an option.[61] After looking at a number of possibilities, the artesian water supply was turned to with the solution of dealing with impurities being solved by pumping the water up to the settling tank on the hillsides above Korokoro Stream to ensure pressure and provide an opportunity for foreign matter to drop to the bottom of the tank before the water was used.[62]

By 1933, concerns were raised over the potential for the Korokoro stream to be polluted by surrounding settlement. As a result, the Petone Borough Council began to take steps to bring the stream, and all its tributaries under the control of the Council. This did not mean the acquisition of land, but only the right to make decisions or take interventions in the management of the stream. The Department of Health supported the move, the Wellington Medical Officer of Health noting of the Korokoro stream: "This is a most excellent source of water supply, but it requires

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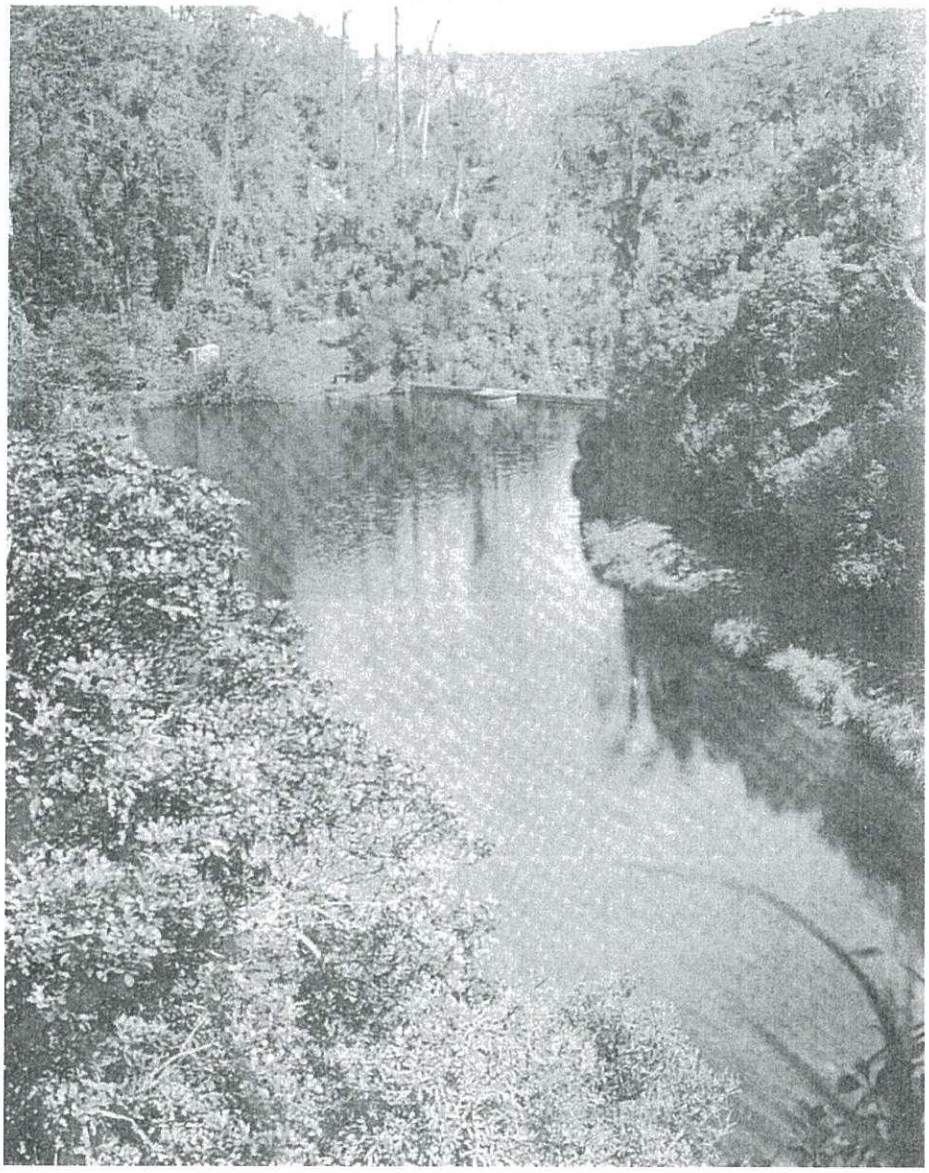
[59] Ibid

[60] Committee of Petone citizens, op cit, pp.70

[61] 12 October 1928, District Engineer to Permanent Head Public Works Dept, ABKK w4357 50/345 pt.1 Arch. NZ, Wgtn.

[62] Committee of Petone citizens, op cit, pp.70

careful supervision."[63] Eventually, however, in December 1964, water from the Korokoro supply system was pronounced unfit for human consumption and Petone residents relied for some years, on their artesian water supply.



The Korokoro Dam:
Alexander Turnbull Library, APG G633

[63] 15 November 1933, Medical Officer of Health to Director General of Health, AAFB w4415 124/12/16 box 242, Arch. NZ, Wgtn.

(g) The Maungaraki Reserve

The demands of the Korokoro water supply had an important impact on the Te Atiawa reserve at Maungaraki.

Little evidence has been found that gives a full history of this land. It does appear, however, that by the 1870s much of the 1,214-acre block had been leased to private persons such as Fitzherbert. In 1884, however, the owners wrote to the Native Minister asking consent, as was required by legislation, to sell 11 acres to the Woollen Manufacturing Company to allow the establishment of their mill at the bottom of Korokoro Stream. The area of the reserve being discussed for sale lay just outside of the boundaries of the Belmont Regional Park. When reporting on this request, the Commissioner of Native Reserves Alexander MacKay noted that the owners were using just one acre of the land in question, and that the sale would be good for them because of the price being offered for the land and because of "the future benefits they will derive by the establishment of the manufacturing in their neighbourhood, as it will undoubtedly, if successful, enhance the value of the remainder of their property..."[64] The request for sale was agreed to and, as noted above, the woollen mill was built.

At this stage, the Maungaraki Reserve was still held in joint ownership by all those who had a beneficial interest although who these people were had not been exactly determined. In 1889, therefore, the owners took a case to the Native Land Court to investigate the title to the land. When the Maungaraki Reserve came before Judge Alexander MacKay, who previously as Commissioner of Native Reserves was familiar with all of the Wellington reserves, he proposed that the block should be awarded to the descendants of those Te Atiawa who were living at Petone when the New Zealand Company arrived in 1839 and who were the owners of the cultivations that had been taken and for which the Maungaraki reserve had been given as compensation. On investigation it was found that 42 persons qualified as having interests in the land. Regarding the extent of each interest, Judge MacKay noted that as the remaining Petone reserves already had been awarded to certain persons, those others who had received little land

[64] Quinn, Steve "Report on the McCleverty Arrangements and McCleverty Reserves", WAI-145, #I8, p.160.

elsewhere should receive the greater proportions of the Maungaraki Block.[65] By 1890, therefore, the title of the Maungaraki Block was awarded in 10 subdivisions. Of these, Sections 3 to 7 were located in what is now the Belmont Regional Park.[66]

With the development of the Petone's water supply coming to focus on the Korokoro Stream, borough officials formed the view that they needed to acquire most of the Maungaraki reserve to preserve the catchment area of the waterway. The water supply was often deemed as being under threat by suburban growth beginning in 1903 when Normandale was being developed and the Petone Borough Solicitor sought reservations of the catchment area.[67] Therefore steps were soon taken to acquire the Maungaraki reserve. In 1904, several sections of the Maungaraki reserve were taken under the Public Works Act for water supply purposes. These included all of No.2 block and most of No.3 (almost 196 out of 239 acres). Although the land was taken compulsorily, owners were awarded compensation.[68]

Seven years later, more land was taken including all of No.4 (almost 88 acres), all of No.7 (119 acres) and all of No.8 (64 acres). When the land came before the Land Court, a number of witnesses appeared to provide testimony on the land's value. The valuers for the Borough Council were strongly critical of the land noting that it had no useful timber, had poor soil and no access. In some places, fires had been through the bush and noxious weeds had taken hold. However, other witnesses called by the owners, including local settlers, had more positive things to say noting that in some places there was quite good timber including tawa and pukatea.[69] The Court awarded compensation closer in line with the valuers brought forward by the owners.

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[65] Minutes of the Native Land Court, Wellington Minute Book 3, pp143-4
[66] Green, Terence "Report on Wellington Tenths Reserve Lands", WAI-145 #E12, App.77
[67] McLennan, op cit, p.29
[68] Minutes of the Native Land Court, Nelson Minute Book 4, p255
[69] Minutes of the Native Land Court, Wellington Minute Book 17, pp314-324

(h) The Belmont Magazines

The Belmont magazines grew out of a general Cabinet decision made in August 1941 to provide £355,000 expenditure on ammunition accommodation for sites around the country. It appears that initially Belmont was not chosen as a site with locations in Waikato, Manawatu, Papakura and Waiouru being selected instead.[70] By October 1942, however, the intention to build 60 magazines at Belmont, with the possibility of increasing these to 80 structures, had been announced.[71] These magazines, it appears, were needed to meet the requirements of the United States army and navy authorities. By the time the decision to built at Belmont was made, there was some urgency in getting on with the work as ammunition was continually arriving from overseas and congestion was building at the Wellington docks.[72] It was expected that 15,000 tons of ammunition and explosives would be eventually stored at the site. Belmont was chosen due to its isolation from residential settlement and the location of roads close to the site. The work at Belmont alone was to take up £200,000 of the allocated budget.[73]

Almost 32 acres of land was required for the magazines. This land was occupied under Defence Emergency Regulations. Almost six acres came from the farm of W.A. Cottle, 2 acres from W.Kilmister's property, just over a quarter acres from G.H. Galloway's land, whilst the bulk of site, (24 acres), was located on the Maher Estate.[74]

In addition to the magazines, a camp to house up to 100 men was to be built. To lessen detection from the air, the Army Camouflage Unit made up plans to lay out this camp so that it had the general appearance of a poultry farm.[75] By February 1943, however, delays with working

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[70] 15 September 1941, Quartermaster General to Engineer-in-chief Public Works Dept, W1 23/112/9 pt.1 Arch. NZ, Wgtn.

[71] 6 October 1942, Commissioner of Defence Constructions to Engineer-in-chief Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn.

[72] 6 October 1942, Quartermaster General to Engineer-in-chief Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[73] 11 November 1942, Beck to Engineer-in-chief Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[74] 27 May 1946, Quartermaster General to Engineer-in-chief Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862/1 box.204 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[75] 23 November 1942, Quartermaster General to Engineer-in-chief Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862

through contract issues with the private firms commissioned to complete the buildings was causing problems as a Public Works Department official informed his chief executive:

> The matter is undoubtedly urgent; the Army is being seriously embarrassed and we have had to prepare extensive areas for the temporary stocking of ammunition in the open. Quite a large quantity is already stacked here and ammunition is arriving continuously.[76]

By March, work had begun on the magazines. Before this, the camp had been built and workmen were living in the huts that would eventually be occupied by the soldiers guarding the magazines. A total of 50 of these huts had been erected. Whilst ten of these had been built with a homestead to look like the poultry farm, the other 40 huts had to be hidden from any potential aerial reconnaissance. Therefore they had been located under a row of tall and spreading pine trees. As a result, these living quarters got no sun, were draughty and were damp in wet and foggy weather. The workers formed themselves into a Belmont Camp Committee and by the end of March 1943, the Secretary of the Committee wrote to officials asking that expenditure be approved to line the huts.

> In their present condition, they are definitely very damp, everything within being affected. As an instance, matches become unstrikable over night. If the huts are not lined, the sickness rate will be very high with the colder and wet weather fast approaching.[77]

The huts were lined as requested but the camp remained a cold place. By April, the Camp Committee has asked for heaters for every hut: "The percentage of colds and complaints due to this is higher than it should be and with the winter coming on the position will become much worse." The District Engineer responded that he was "definitely not in favour of providing individual heating for huts" as this would create a precedent for every Public Works Department

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box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[76] 11 February 1943, District Engineeer to Permanent Head Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[77] 31 March 1943, Assistant Under Secretary, Public Works Dept to District Engineer, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

camp around the country to lobby for improved heating.[78] However, a portable electric heater was sent to the camp for use in the recreation room. By 23 June, the Secretary of the Camp Committee wrote to officials to express the gratitude of the men: "If you lived here you would doubtless be as pleased as we are".[79]

Another complaint that had been received from the Camp Committee was that the army would not let taxis drive the men into the camp when they returned from trips into town. As the sentry post was one and a half miles from the men's huts, they had quite a hike ahead of them when they returned to the camp which often was at night. The District Engineer responded that this was a matter for the Army to consider and that possibly a pass system could be brought in. He added, however: "all I would say is that if the Army should agree to letting taxis in they should be searched for liquor by the guard." [80]

Despite these difficulties, the magazines were built by June 1944 at which time the workmen moved out, and the Army moved in. By mid-1945, with the end of the War in sight, the Army was not sure of the future of the magazines. Whilst this matter was being determined, it was decided that as half-mile exclusion zone would be put in place around the magazines. This affected 991 acres of surrounding land with only the local landowning farmers being allowed within the declared danger zone.[81] In the beginning of 1950, however, the land was officially taken for defence purposes and the owners received compensation.[82]

After the War ended, the magazines remained manned by a reduced guard of five soldiers. By 1949, the magazines still held 2,776 boxes of howitzer shells and 3,655 boxes of other artillery ordinance. In addition, 1,755 boxes of grenades were located there. However, the maintenance of this ammunition was becoming a problem. The majority of the magazines leaked. Several needed

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[78] 22 April 1943, District Engineer to Permanent Head Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

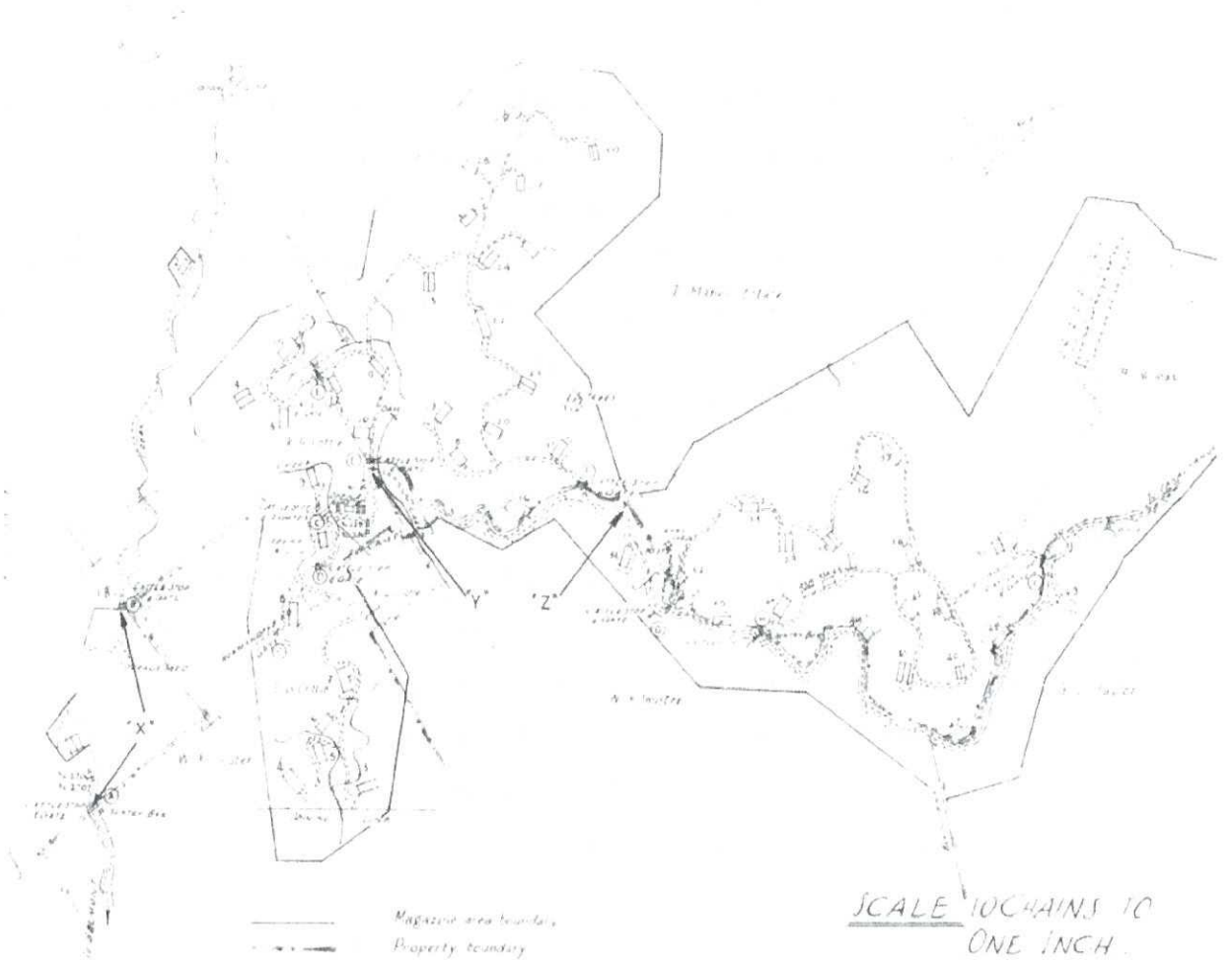
[79] 23 June 1943, Engineer-in-Chief, Public Works Dept to District Engineer, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[80] 22 April 1943, District Engineer to Permanent Head Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862 box.205 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[81] 9 July 1945, Quartermaster General to Engineer-in-chief Public Works Dept, AAQB w3950 23/862/1 box.204 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[82] See AAQB w3950 23/862/1 box.204 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

restacking as earthquakes had shifted and mixed up batches of ammunition. In two of the magazines, the labels on boxes could not be read.[83]



Plan of the Belmont Magazines, 1945:
AD-W w1965, 51/125/1, Arch. NZ, Wgtn

The following year, in May 1950, it was discovered that two magazines had been broken into and entered. Break-in attempts were evident at a further two magazines. Initially, it was thought that anti-aircraft ammunition and possibly some grenades had been stolen but investigations eventually revealed that no ammunition was missing. Although 11 men were now stationed at

[83] 30 June 1949, "Annual Magazine Inspection Report – Belmont", AD-W w1965 51/125/1 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

the site, this was not enough to undertake regular security patrols. However, as suburbs were being established closer to the magazine site, increased personnel and patrols would be brought into effect.[84]

Other problems occurred. On 6 May 1951, a fire broke out as a result of heating installation work that had been done on site and although the fire was soon got under control by the men stationed there, once again the vulnerability of the isolated site was clear.[85] Nevertheless the site remained occupied for a number of years through to the end of the decade.

(i) Belmont Regional Park

By 1900, almost all of the land that is currently located within the Belmont Regional Park was in private ownership. Over the course of the twentieth century, through a number of different processes, the various blocks that make up the Park were acquired by Crown agencies and local authorities. The first such land, as noted previously, was the Maungaraki Maori Reserve that was acquired for water preservation purposes by 1911 by the Petone Borough Council.

In the 1930s, the Lower Hutt City Council acquired a small amount of land between Korokoro and Horokiwi and two hectares of pine trees were planted on it as part of a Great Depression work scheme.[86] In the 1950s, the Hutt Council purchased an area of land from the Kilmister, Kells and Gault families. This 632-hectare area, which became known as the Kilmister Block, was to be used for housing and roading purposes.[87] When these plans did not go ahead, the Council leased the land to the Department of Lands and Survey (and subsequently to Landcorp) for farming purposes.

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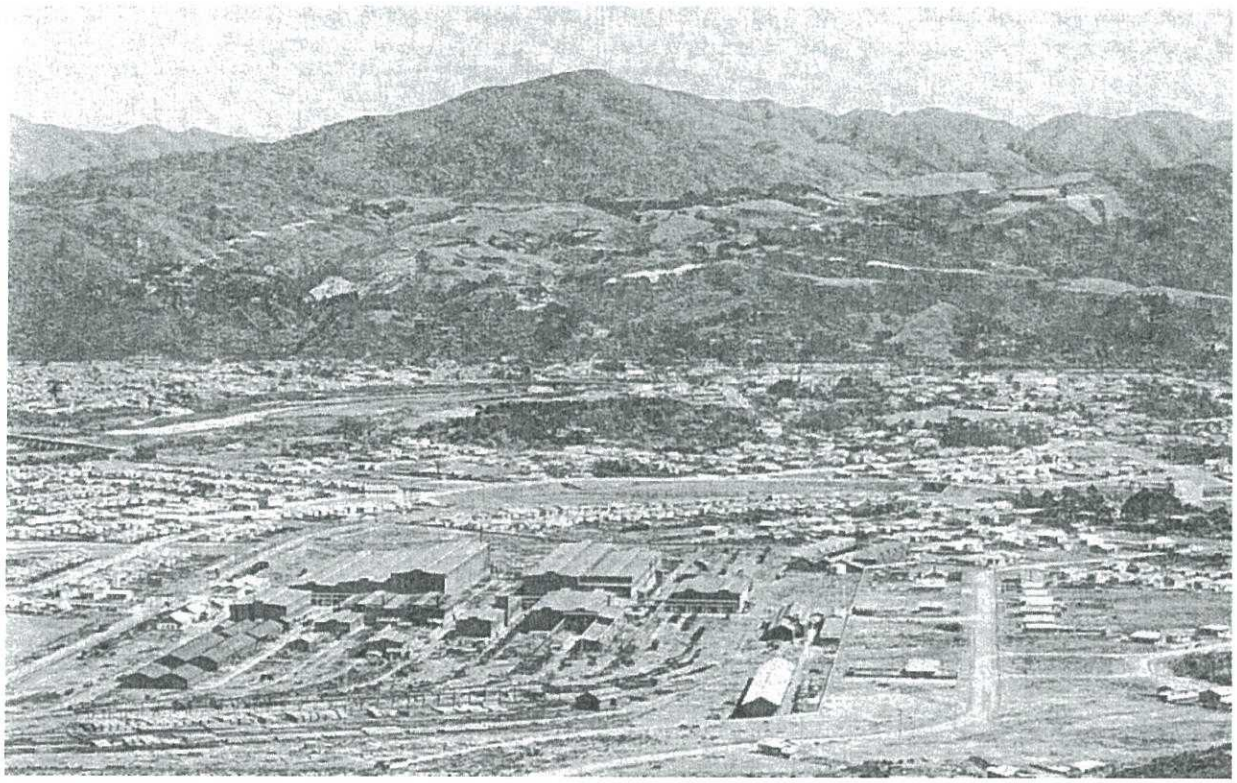
[84] See various letters, AD-W w1965 51/125/1 Arch. NZ, Wgtn
[85] See "Conclusions and Recommendations" of Investigating Officer, AD-W w1965 51/125/1 Arch. NZ, Wgtn
[86] WRC file, R/05/01/07, Vol.1
[87] WRC file, LM/09/06/03, Vol.1



The Western Hills showing the increasing urban growth 1932:
Alexander Turnball Library, G 87616 1/2

On the western side of the Park, the Crown purchased the Maher Estate and the Waitangirua Block in 1959 for housing purposes, but when 1,300 acres were found to be surplus to requirements, they were taken over and farmed by the Department of Lands and Survey as the Waitangirua Farm Settlement.[88]

The Waitangirua farm increasingly provided a means to utilise unused Crown land that had been acquired by several agencies for a number of purposes including housing, defence and electricity generation. In 1967, the Department of Defence land on which the Belmont magazines sat was taken over by the Department of Lands and Survey and added to the Waitangirua Farm settlement.[89] On 20 May 1971, the land on which the magazines sat was released for defence purposes and became Crown land.[90]

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[88] WRC file, 108/3
[89] Wellington Regional Council, *Belmont Regional Park Management Plan, Part 3 Resource Statement*, Wgtn, Wellington

By the early 1970s, the Waitangirua Farm Settlement consisted of 1,862 hectares and ran almost 10,000 sheep and 1,000 cows. Despite facing difficulties of public trespass from being located so close to several urban centres, the farm was regarded as being successful because of strong management and because of the farming methods that had been adopted. [91]

Also by the early 1970s, local authority planners around the Wellington District were becoming increasingly aware that many of the rural areas surrounding the cities that informally had been made available to public use by landowners were being closed off as the urban population swelled. With a core of public land held by central and local agencies sitting between the Lower Hutt and Porirua cities the Belmont area was chosen as having the greatest potential to be maintained as a permanent open space area. A proposal arose to establish it as a rural zone where the rural character of the land would be retained and improved, whilst greater public recreational use would be encouraged.[92]

At a meeting of the Wellington Regional Planning Authority on 19 November 1973, it was resolved to ask the various local authorities and state agencies that held land within the proposed park, to provide in their district scheme or development plans, allowance for designating a regional park centred on Belmont. By 1976, the Petone Borough Council had introduced the requested provisions and the Porirua and Lower Hutt City Councils were taking similar steps.[93]

By March 1974, the objectives identified for the Park included the protection and enhancement of valuable common open space and natural features that currently existed between the district's cities. Urban populations were to be given an opportunity to enjoy natural landscapes located close to the places in which they lived.[94] It was envisaged that the farming activity would continue, but that the park would be developed to provide for walking, riding and picnicking. It was even envisaged that the stream systems might be developed to provide recreational fishing.

Regional Council, 1989, p.43

[90] See AAQB w3950 23/862/1 box.204 Arch. NZ, Wgtn

[91] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.3

[92] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.2

[93] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.2

[94] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.2

In the initial planning stages, more intensive uses, including archery, rifle shooting and go-carting, were also considered as possibilities.[95]

In April 1977, the Minister of Lands agreed in principle to include the 895-hectare Waitangirua Block within the proposed park on the proviso that farming activity would continue.[96] Those farming the Waitangirua Block were supportive of the land being included in the Park believing that it could be used as a mechanism to address some of the problems that were being encountered from being located so close to urban centres. These included sheep deaths from dog attacks (recorded at 483 in 1976), stock theft, the shooting of lambs, and malicious damage of fencing and other farm property. By bringing more people onto the Park area it was hoped to provide more restraint over the delinquent behaviour. In addition, signage and public education would lead to a greater appreciation of how to use the farmland for recreation purposes. Finally, track systems could be developed to keep people away from sensitive farming areas.[97]

To assist in planning the park, a large multi-disciplinary research project was commissioned from Victoria University to document the park's geology, climate, vegetation, wildlife and history.[98] By mid-1976, the research team had reported the findings of their investigations. They also reached a number of recommendations on the ideal boundaries of the park, and on the recreational activities that were consistent with the park's environment and objectives. Shooting was to be actively phased out, boating or camping was said to be unfeasible and trail bikes were not wanted by any of those consulted. However, the other activities envisaged by planners were supported. Pest eradication was also urged.[99]

Ahead of the Park being officially opened, initial development began in the late 1970s. Much of the track system of the Belmont Park was already established over the public lands by the time the Park was being formed.[100] Unemployment Scheme labour was used to clear gorse and

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[95] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.2

[96] Wellington Regional Council, *Belmont Regional Park Management Plan, Part 2 Resource Statement*, Wgtn, Wellington Regional Council, Sept. 1996, , p.3

[97] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.3

[98] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.2

[99] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.3

[100] Wellington Regional Council, Belmont Regional Park Life Cycle Plan, WRC Oct 1999 draft., p.8

improve or establish tracks. One of the first tracks established in 1978 was the Korokoro Dam walkway.[101] For those areas on the Waitangirua farm that were too heavily affected by gorse, aerial spraying was adopted. Following the eradication of noxious weeds, it was planned to further fence the land. Areas prone to erosion were to be planted out. [102]

In 1980, an old, dying pine plantation located at the Oakleigh Street entry to the Park was felled by the Petone Borough Council. The Regional Authority took the opportunity to form tracks in the area, develop car parking and replant a woodland area. The development plan was prepared in consultation with Maungaraki residents.[103] Development within the Belmont Regional Park has a long history of partnerships with community groups. On the Cannon's Creek side, the Friends of Maara Roa and the Brandon Intermediate School have been involved. On the western hills side, the Otonga Intermediate School has been active in replantings.[104]

Planting Native Shrubs :
Hutt News, 19 July 1994

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[101] Pharazyn Landscape Design "Takapu Road block... An assessment of the Recreation and Landscape Values", Wgtn, p.5
[102] WRC file, 108-3, Vol.3
[103] WRC file, R/05/04/03, Vol.1
[104] Wellington Regional Council "Cannons Creek: Restoration and Development", WRC Oct 2001

Aside from the public land, a certain amount of private land was located in the midst of the blocks belonging to central government agencies and local authorities. Whilst the park's planners were sanguine about leaving that land within the park and making access arrangements with the owners, the park was seen as being more viable from a management point of view if the private land could be acquired. Therefore, purchases were negotiated of three large blocks of private land of over 300 acres each.[105]

More land became available. Since 1905, Bill Ward had been the holder of the lease over the Normandale rural sections. When he passed away, his widow Mabel, who became executrix to the estate, sold the leased farm on 27 April 1950 to Donovan Edwin Cooper. Three years later, the property was transferred to the Fugle family who, under changing regulations, were able to freehold the land. In turn, in 1977, most of the land was sold and became the property of the Wellington Regional Water Board after which it was included in the Belmont Park.[106]

During the early 1980s, further land was acquired that was to be included in the Park. In 1980, the Takapu Road Block was acquired by the New Zealand Electricity Department as a small part of the land contained a substation. The rest of the land was farmed by the Department of Lands and Survey as part of the Waitangirua Block.[107] In 1981, the Wellingon Regional Council purchased a block of land at Stratton Street to link up the lands of the Hutt City and Petone Borough Councils with the Waitangirua Farm block.[108] Another acquisition was of the Dry Creek property which had originally been acquired by the Crown for state housing purposes. As it was found to be surplus to this requirement, in 1983 it was transferred to the Department of Lands and Survey. This was added to the Park after 1986 when the land was transferred over to the Department of Conservation.[109]

From the mid-1980s, planning for the Park continued. In 1986, the Wellington Regional Council commissioned landscape design proposals for the Cannons Creek entrance of the Park. At the

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[105] WRC file, 108-3, Vols.2 and 3
[106] McLennan, op cit, p.142-3
[107] WRC file, R/05/01/03, Vol.1
[108] Pharazyn Landscape Design, op cit, p.5
[109] Ibid. Also Wellington Regional Council, (1996), op cit, p.4

time, this area was predominantly grazed pasture and reverted gorse. The lands had also been damaged by a burn off which got out of control during the early 1980s when the land was being farmed. Over a number of years, the proposed landscape proposals were implemented with tree plantings being a key feature.[110]

Other management steps were put in place. By the late 1980s, the Belmont magazines, whilst recognised as being unique due to their large number and their close proximity to settled areas, were also deteriorating with the doors missing off many buildings and timber work on the structures beginning to rot. It was therefore recommended that a conservation plan be developed to address these difficulties.[111] In 1988, a draft management plan was also opened for public consultation.

The Belmont Park was officially opened on 2 April 1989. Conservation and recreation groups, as well as state agencies provided static displays. Due to their link with the World War II magazines, the New Zealand Army displayed a field kitchen as well as tanks, artillery and ammunition. Several organised walks featured. Rides included horse treks, trailbiking and the Army giving rides in unimogs. Up to 1,400 people attended. [112] Belmont was said to be the first park in New Zealand to combine private and public land managed for recreation, farming, forestry and conservation purposes. Later that year the Regional Council received the New Zealand Planning Institute's Award of Merit in recognition of its efforts to preserve open space, and the New Zealand Institute of Parks and Recreation Administration's National Project Award for outstanding merit.[113]

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[110] Wellington Regional Council, (2001), op cit, p.4
[111] WRC file, R/05/01/05, Vol.1
[112] Fowler, Elizabeth "Belmont Regional Park Opening Day Report", 2 Apr 1989
[113] WRC file, R/05/01/07, Vol.1