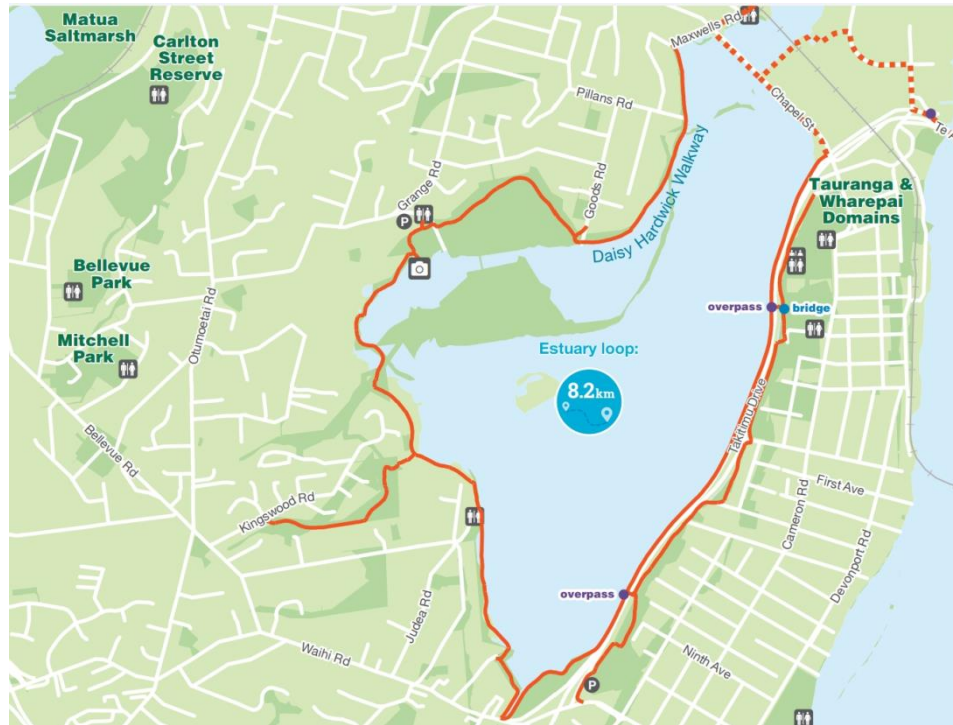


# *Waikareao Estuary Walkway*

*July 31, 2022*



*Distance: 8.2 km loop track*

*Waikareao means “sparkling waters of the new day”. The track, involving boardwalks, bridges, gravel and sealed footpath, passes through and round tidal wetland. This estuary track is popular for walking and cycling in Central Tauranga. The entrance is at Maxwells Road, Otūmoetai.*

*From: Waikareao Estuary Walkway Website, 29 November, 2019 (<http://www.tauranga.govt.nz/exploring/parks-and-reserves/walkways/waikareao-estuary-walkway>)*



*Nesting in the Bay of Plenty, a span of waterbody, just out there...*

*We are on the edge of inner water Waimapu Estuary and Waipu Bay, the tidal lagoon part?*

*Standing in front of the noticeboard "Tsunami Evacuation Information", it is advised acting on foot being the rule.*

*Oh, how able we are and how lucky we are at this moment. A calm morning, with bit of rain, nothing too drastic.*

*With all the possibility of having a hazard, being in the southwestern tip of Ring of Fire , volcanicity, and earthquake and subsequent tsunami... What on earth to happen at this time of the winter year.*

*Waīorohi/Kopurererua River is feeding the estuary, then the Bay. Chance? of upstream tsunamic wave towards here from the ocean, with sort of amplification... We are going to walk round the rim of the estuary.*

*The volcanic cone Mount Maunganui is out there, on the further side of Waipu Bay. We are supposed to walk this cone but having a change with the closure of the track.*





*Walking a short distance from the carpark, we step into the beginning part of Waikareao Walkway (Daisy Hardwick Section).*

*Pretty close to the high tide water level, the walkway is quite protected from erosion with rocky lining. Wind is blowing ashore, turning ripples all the way towards us...A lively scene, an active day for us to move around.*

*Standing trees, running locals, yeah, with bikers too. We all enjoy what's can be...straying around to catch the cherished chance of exercising.*

*Going into McCardles Bush, we enter a preserved Category 1 Ecological Area with high biodiversity value. Towering trees dominate, providing shelter from the chilly morning wind.*





# Waikareao Walkway



Maxwells Road via McCardles Bush 45min ←

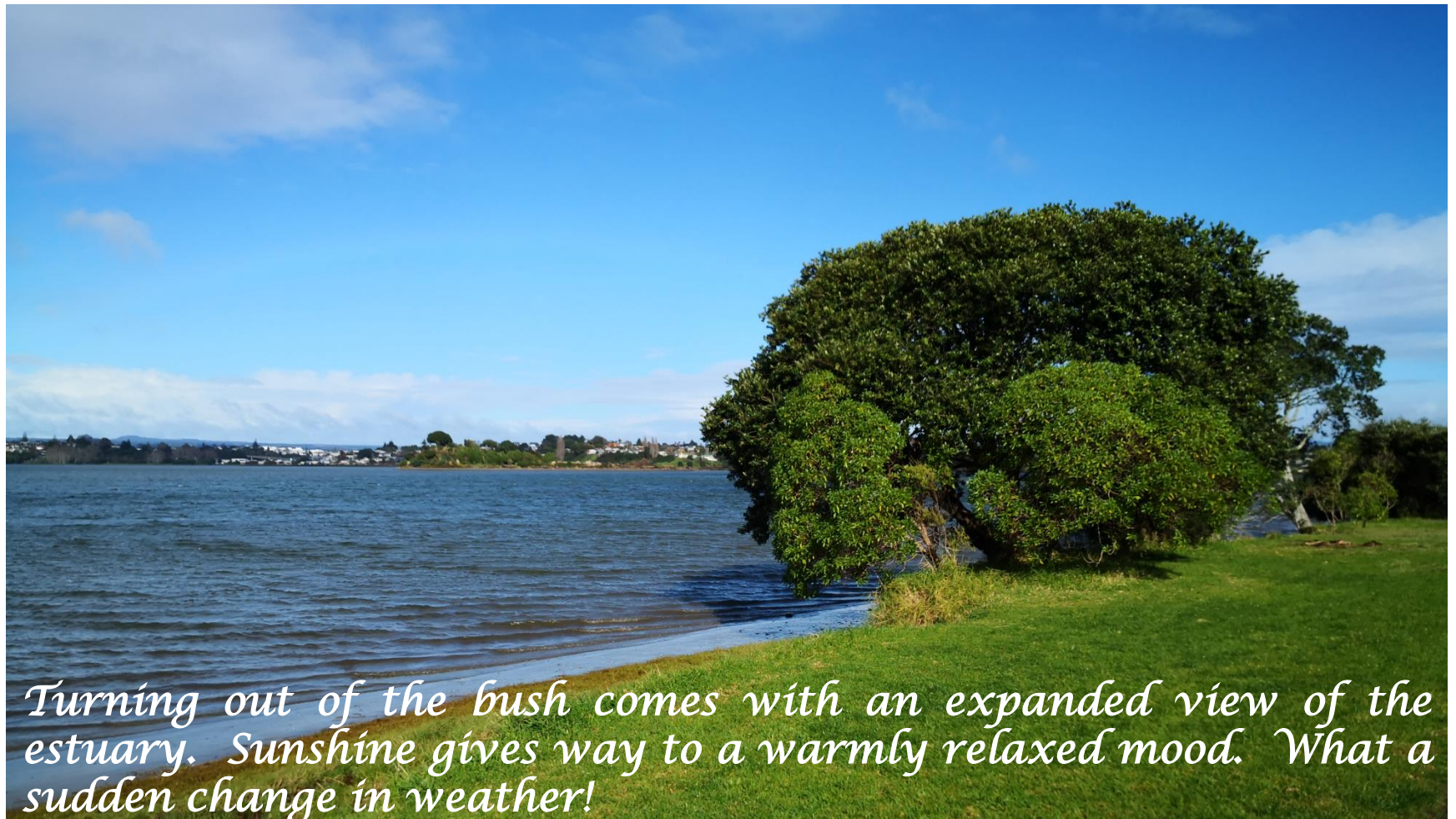
Waihi Road Via Don Stewart Walkway 45 min →











*Turning out of the bush comes with an expanded view of the estuary. Sunshine gives way to a warmly relaxed mood. What a sudden change in weather!*

*Waves over, seeming closer, the freshwater, somewhat salty (?), emanates with an increasing inhabited distant (in the vicinity too) urbanized Tauranga, with mangrove inhabited tidal zone.*





*All over, right in front, how close it can be...On the boardwalk, we are amidst in the mangrove habitat.*

*Through the winding boardwalk, we stays above the estuary mudflat area, with the potential of encountering local flora and fauna (stated on information panels at the lookout point).*

*A unique ecosystem along the sheltered area of intertidal zone...The saline environment provides a cleansing mechanism for silt sedimentation and detoxication, heavy metal purification, carbon dioxide removal...stabilizes coastal environment and minimizes global warming effect...*

*Seems endless, the vast stretch of water provides favourable environment for wildlife survival and breeding.*













*Various waterfowls are seen along the walkway. Can be a bit noisy. They tends to gather around us when we are having our lunch after the walk. Sorry, we are not suppose to give birds anything, just to save them from disabling their skills in food hunting, the way to sustain life.*





*There the signpost “Motuopae” pointing to somewhere in the middle of Waikareao Estuary...*

*We are much surprise of what's going on? There is clear sign of sand/gravel spit leading from the shore into the estuary water.*

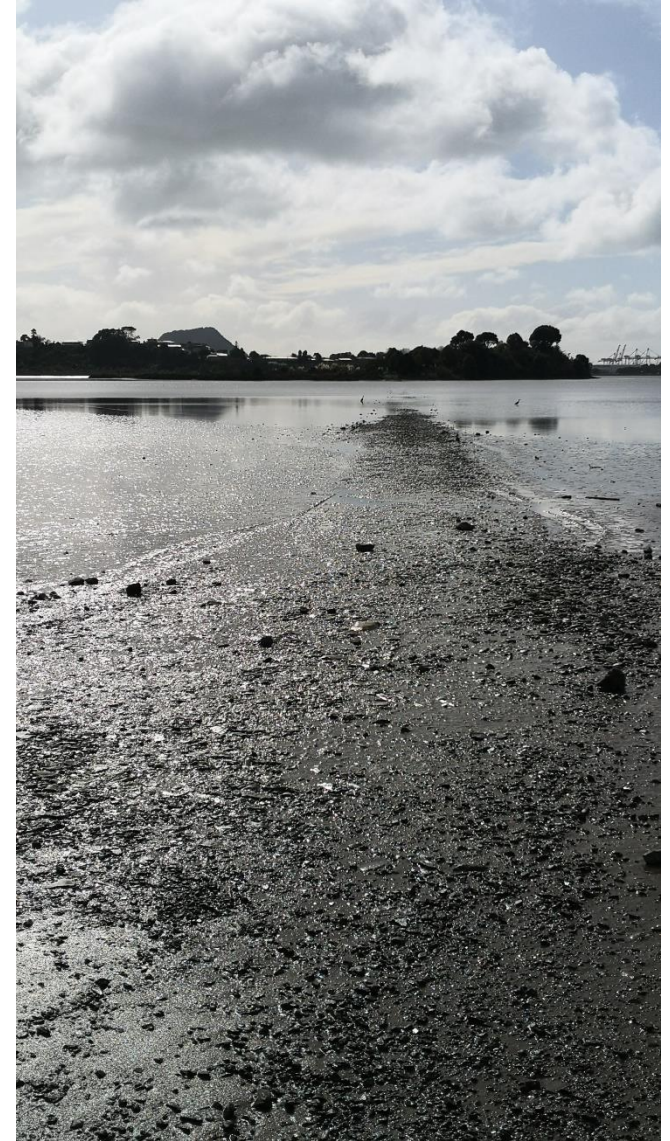
*Is it possible to walk along the spit...?*

*Not so, too high the tide...backlighting in the shadow of bright sun.*

*With tidal variation, different features of the Estuary not able to differentiate ...Anything from the website?*

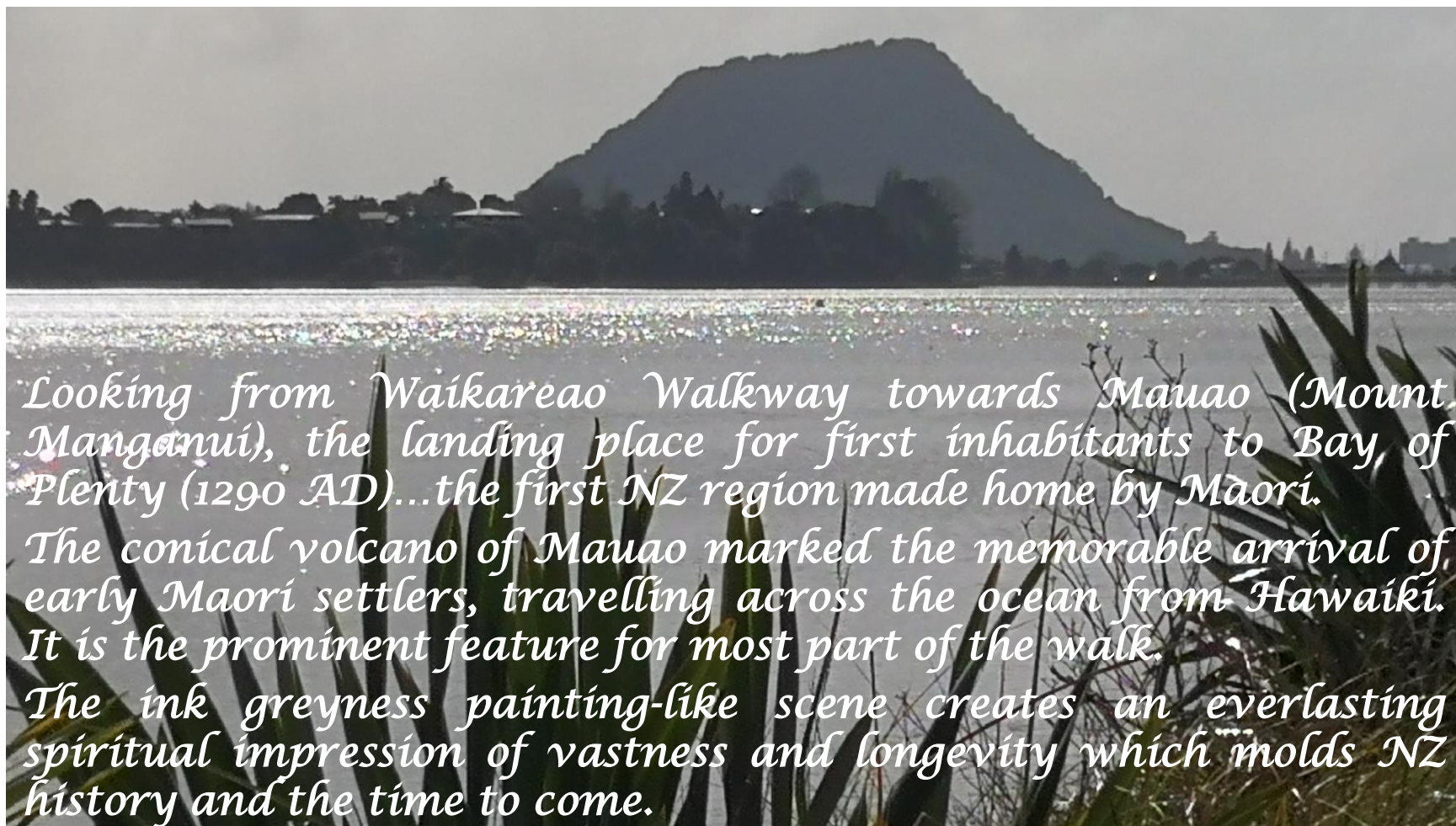
*Come and go, to and fore, what a mighty waterbody can be for Maori.*

*As for generations, here is the current burial place for Ngai Tamarawaho iwi, Motuopae Island (also known as Peach Island).*









*Looking from Waikareao Walkway towards Mauao (Mount Manganui), the landing place for first inhabitants to Bay of Plenty (1290 AD)...the first NZ region made home by Māori.*

*The conical volcano of Mauao marked the memorable arrival of early Maori settlers, travelling across the ocean from Hawaiki. It is the prominent feature for most part of the walk.*

*The ink greyness painting-like scene creates an everlasting spiritual impression of vastness and longevity which molds NZ history and the time to come.*

*Right across the water, settlers nowadays have living harmoniously with the ocean. Glittering sparkles, what a magnificent experience of enchantment...*





*Where the tiny stream crosses, this's  
the place for settlement. We are on  
the boardwalk, on the very deep...*

*Winter cherry, so many on the tip, the  
very tip of the branches...*

*Clustering together with heaps of  
them...*

*Never forget, never miss...among the  
greenish bush, in the backdrop of the  
bluish sky.*

*Seems like in Spring but it's Winter  
now.*

*What a good Sunday, what a  
wonderful sunshine.*

*Just have a shot, just have a look...*

*What is temporary, what the bursting  
blossom is, in full - a glossy day with a  
colourful mind.*





*Crossing the bridge over Kopurererua River (using the footpath of Waihi Road), we alter from a southward to a northward direction.*

*Mangrove tidal zones, parks and reserves are characteristics on the western side of the walkway while the eastern side follows Takitimu Drive (Pacific Coast Highway 2).*

*Green stretch of grass extends right down from the bridge. The weather becomes better with sunshine. However, still feeling cold and clammy...*

*As we move on further, occasional rain showers and wind come and go along the bustling highway. Although a bit monotonous over this side of the walk, we have to persist with our pace.*

*Looking down the shores, waterfowls are busy preying on the mudflats and the shallow water areas. Hovering freely with wings fully extended...one can have the sentiment of leisure walking does pay.*

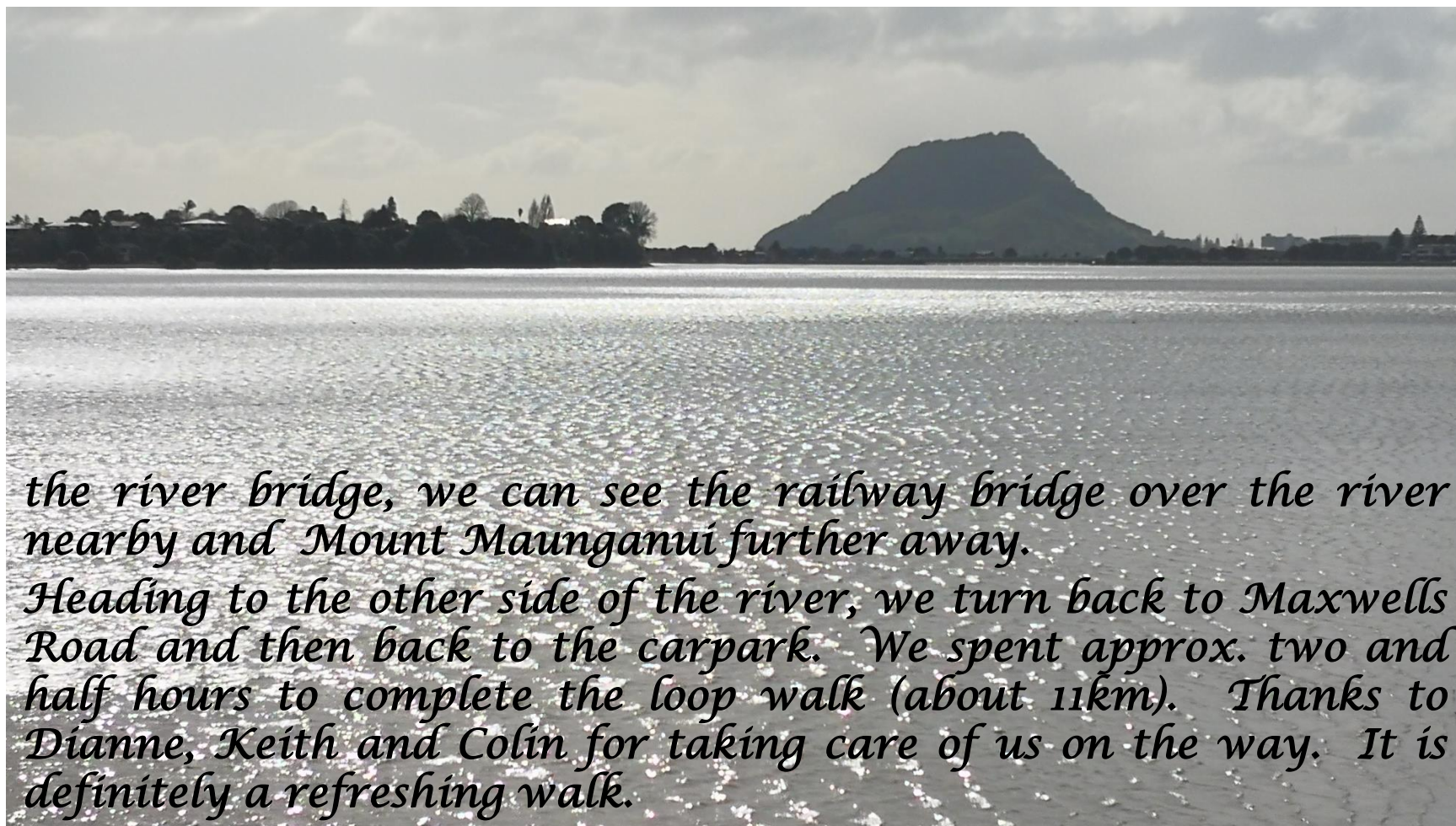
*At the road junction near the petrol station, we turn to Chapel Street which cuts right perpendicular across the river. Crossing*











*the river bridge, we can see the railway bridge over the river nearby and Mount Maunganui further away.*

*Heading to the other side of the river, we turn back to Maxwell's Road and then back to the carpark. We spent approx. two and half hours to complete the loop walk (about 11km). Thanks to Dianne, Keith and Colin for taking care of us on the way. It is definitely a refreshing walk.*