

Pírongia Trails

August 28, 2022

*Tírohanga-Ruapane Loop Track
(Mount Pírongia Forest Park)*

Pírongia Esplanade Walkway



The tracks are done in a loop with off-the-track along the joining bait route in Mount Pirongia Forest Park, Waikato.

Tirohanga Track

Distance: 2 km one-way

Difficulty: Grade 2

Stairs and roots are on the way. Be careful on safety as it can be muddy and slippery on many parts of the track, especially on rocky part. The track, starting from Corcoran Road, will lead to Ruapane Peak Lookout (723m) with spectacular view of the alluvial plain below in Waikato Basin.

Ruapane Track

Distance: 4 km one-way (only covers part of the track)

Difficulty: Grade 2

Descending (from Ruapane Lookout) to the junction between Tirohanga Track and Ruapane Track, head right into Tirohanga. The track is quite steep as it follows a ridge.





Marching the way, we prop into a steep start. Tirohanga Track is quite a harsh one.

Slowing down a bit with much stairs and roots along the way. Considerable caution is required as no one wants an accident.

Praise to God, the track is pretty dry although still with a bit of wetly mud and slippery surfaces.

Got short of breath, have some panting, have a stop to appreciate the foliage.... decaying leaves and twigs on forest floor.

Digging into dense native bush, we are aware of the greenish vegetation around. Oh, sign of getting warm - Spring is here and coming?! We got a nice weather.



*Twigs, roots? Ah, what a growth!
In the shady open ground, things can still happen.*

*A closer look, a further move...comes with generation and
regeneration. A dropping twig, comes with another chain of
boosterism. A bloom of life.*



Sits on the forest floor, buries in the leaves...comes with a mixture of colours...and life.

Dressed in greenish mossy outfit, there brings with intense vividness. Growth can be dramatic and is pulsating.

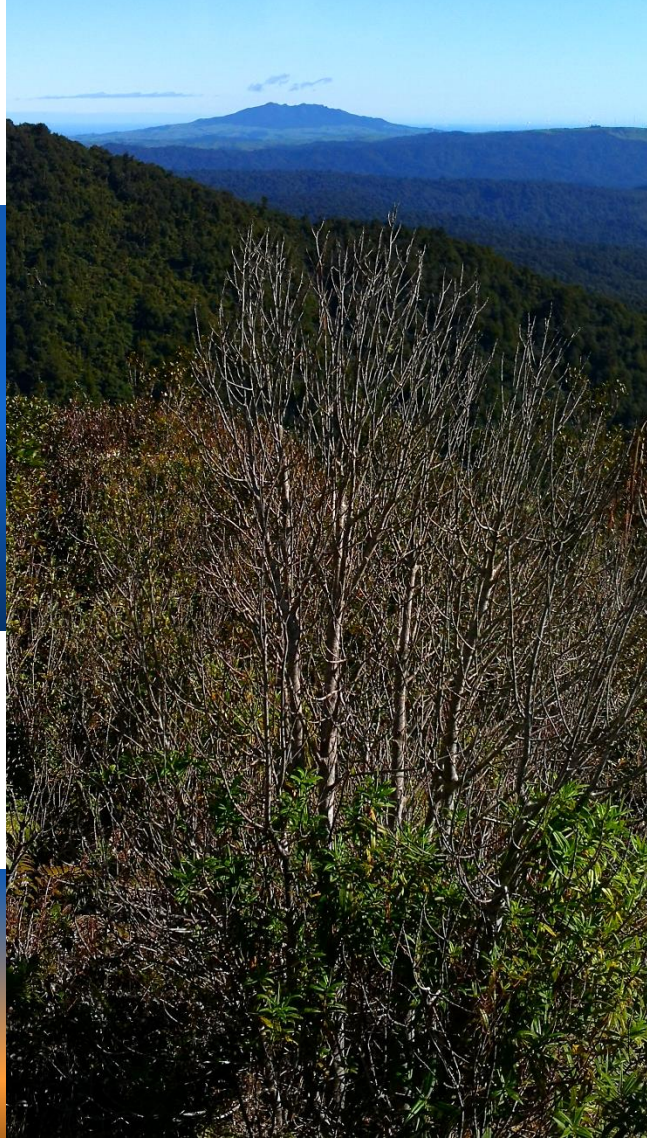
Patches of lichens, round and irregular...a well-formed rim, with a margin of possibility. A natural blend of existence.

Another root, another colony...the life of companionship.





*We got to be here. This is where we want to be.
Fresh air, sunshine – a lively move, the kind of generation...
Indigenous to New Zealand, the Waikato Basin with alluvial
deposit in volcanic zone - Waikato River meanders around.
Pirongia with its basaltic larva sits high and still remains the
highest mount (959m) in Waikato Region.
Although with alternations of farmland, pasture and native
growth, the area continues as a tranquil green. Pirongia Forest
Park goes on with the largest stretch of unbroken native forest
left in the Waikato. We got to have a look.
At the Ruapane Lookout (523m), we sit down and have a
thoughtful reconciliation.*



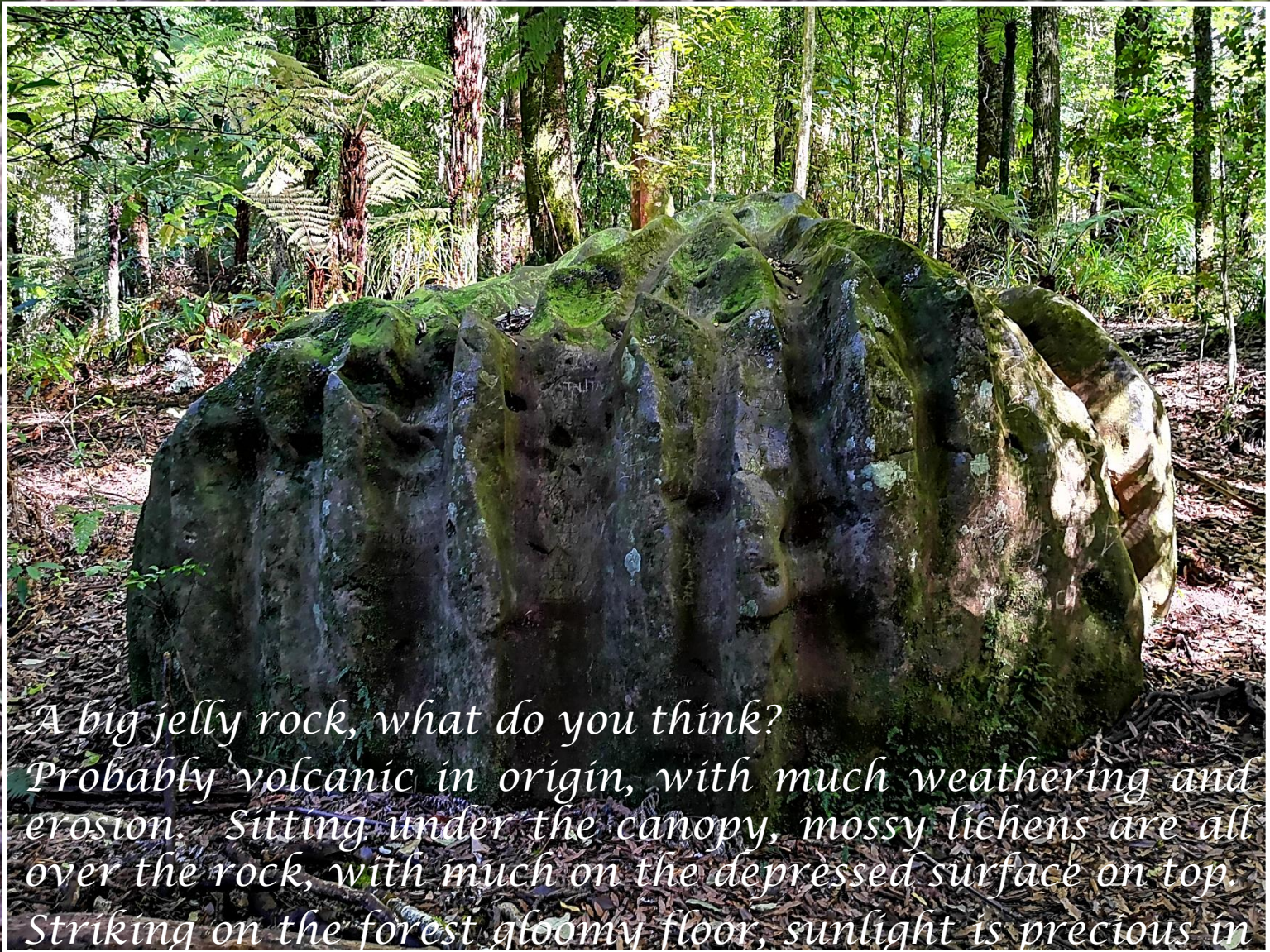
A recent establishment, a trig monument of highest, there hikers sit around and enjoy the mighty scenic revelation of our naturalness.

A historical icon, a trigonometric calculation - here marks the arrival of early settlers. A time of measurement, the time of construction and establishment, pioneers found what to be and where to be...

Whoever geologist, surveyor or geographer... ran over new found land ...Above sea-level 2400 feet was the location. The Tīrohanga Track started at 1000 feet. This remarkable deed was done quite some time ago. New bush coming up with picturesque "highland" and "lowland" recreating terrain.







A big jelly rock, what do you think?

Probably volcanic in origin, with much weathering and erosion. Sitting under the canopy, mossy lichens are all over the rock, with much on the depressed surface on top.

Striking on the forest gloomy floor, sunlight is precious in keeping the forest warm. What a seasonal warmth we have. Yes, it is a jelly on this side. On the other side, it looks like a coral rock to my understanding.



On the bait route joining Tirohanga and Ruapane, we are in the midst of wildness.

Appears not many trampers on recently, there is increasing under- and over-growth.

With dense vegetation, freely ramifying, it's difficult to move around. Following the pink arrow sign, it seems we are moving in a maze.

Although narrow stream-crossing has no great trouble at all, climbing old big fallen trees is distressing with my short legs. Cant's help but keep an eye on safety in the bush...

...quite unexpected after two stream-crossing, Grant alleges that we have diverged from the original planned bait track... What could be done?



*A puzzle, which way to go?
How can it be? We have
strictly follow the pink arrow
track sign?*

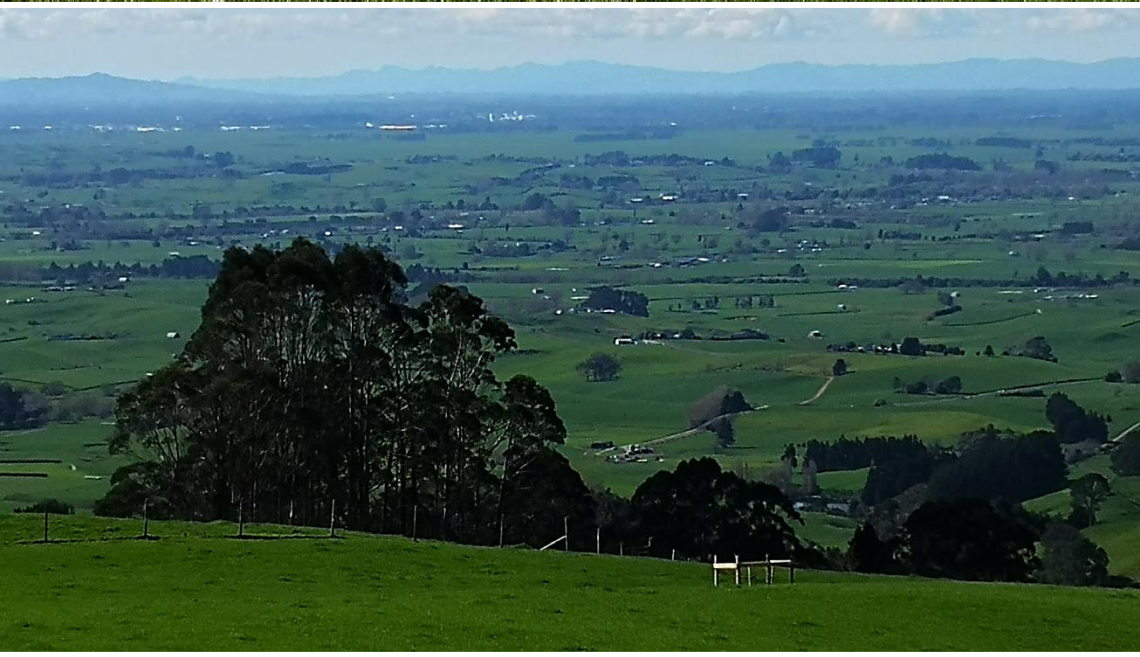
*...By the way, Grant said we
either can go among the bush
up the slope or carry on
following the signed track...*

*Sort of wonder, sort of
surprise...let's keep going...have
some adventure...Sticking to
the same pink-signed track.*

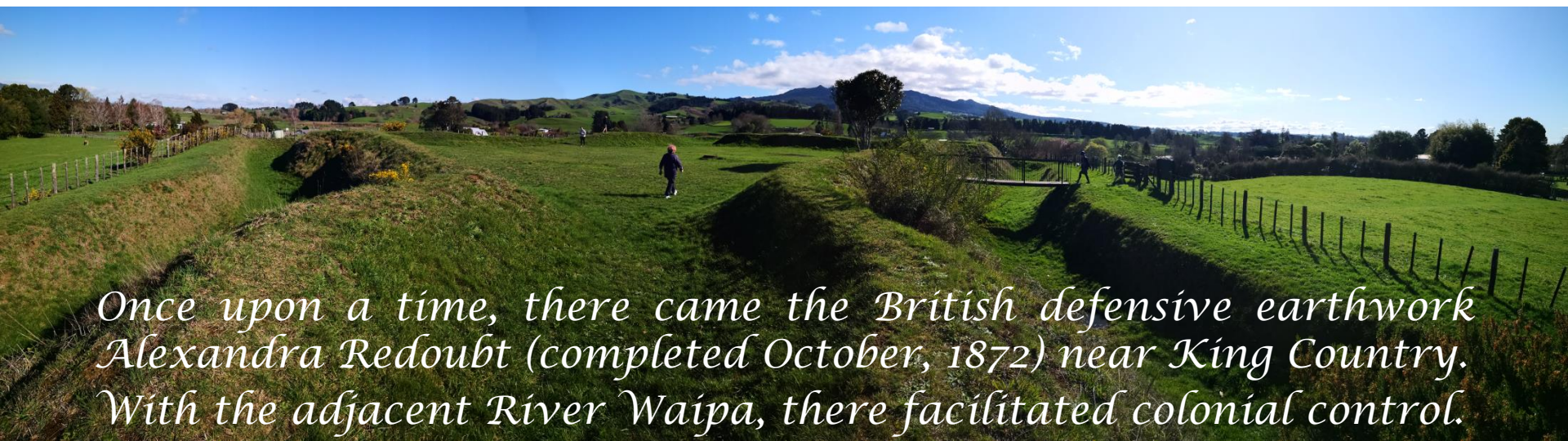
*Wandering up and down in the
thick forest, we keep a cool
head and deliberately carry on,
hoping to end the "unknown
detouring" in the very second.*

*Quite a blessing, we finally
return to Tirohanga and back
to the entrance in a second.*









Once upon a time, there came the British defensive earthwork Alexandra Redoubt (completed October, 1872) near King Country. With the adjacent River Waipa, there facilitated colonial control. Relic remains, only the foundation left. The fortification now nests in green, giving a peaceful relaxed Winter afternoon.

Whatever happened...we cross over the deep trench, step on top of the high wall remain, wander into the blockhouse and flagstaff area...much of the surrounding area is kept as open ground under New Zealand Heritage...a signature of European presence.

Alexandra, now Pirongia, much known for the famous Mount Pirongia nowadays, the easily access Pirongia Forest Park too.

Once in a while, we come over to remind us of what's had happened. To many of us, much we learn is the beauty charm of the natural surroundings that envisage admiration.







Pirongia Esplanade Walkway (Grade 1)

Wanting to do more...Still got time after the short loop-track in Pirongia Forest Park.

How about a river walk...pretty good idea, just relax and wander around...Allison drives us to the starting point.

Parking on Franklin Street carpark, we head towards Crozier Street. The track begins at the river end of the Street.



At the river terrace, we can see Waipa River down below. Walking down to the river bank, we can see the river is sweeping in a rush.

The river is quite full with the heavy rainfall in the past few days. Nothing clear for the water but muddy a lot.

The walkway runs through a scenic reserve and wetlands. It is well-maintained and has been upgraded with timber bridge, boardwalk in recent year.

All the way winding along the river, pretty fresh and calm under the sun...crossing the little bridge, we climb up the terrace and head back to the carpark.