

In 1950 he bought a 80ha farm near Te Awamutu for 895 pounds (\$1790) and broke it in himself. "I paid the cash for it," he recalls, saying he was never a boozier or a smoker and saved his money.

He sold the farm in 1964 for \$60,000, "because my boys did not want it. After I sold it I realised I did the wrong thing, I should have put a sharemilker on it, but I could not do anything. I was beginning to get run down, working, working, working."

But in the 1950s, the Maori world began to realise the treasure it had in Henare Tuwhangai, and the late Te Ariki Nui King Koroki selected him to be one of his speakers after hearing him speak on a marae.

He is now Te Ariki Nui Dame Te Atairangikaahu's senior speaker, and the chairman of her advisory council.

"I did not want to be," he laughs, "but she just looked at me like that, laughed at me and confirmed it."

He now represents Dame Te Ata at functions all over the country, and sometimes travels overseas with her. He is the Kingitanga's nominee to Waikato University's Maori Research Centre advisory board.

"A lot of people come to me for advice and knowledge. I taught pretty near the whole of the Ngaruawahia crowd, and the Te Kuiti ones, some in Rotorua, some in Otaki," he says.

He is in demand for his knowledge of ancient sacred ceremonies — to lift the tapu from new buildings, for example.

"I am the only one living who still has the karakia for these things, and when I die, they all go with me!!"

"Young people these days, I do not think they have..." His voice tapers away. He starts again. "Some of them come to me just for a certain thing, a waiata or something, and that's all."

Henare Tuwhangai is one of the last of an ancient and sacred school of Maori learning whose knowledge was only passed down to those the elders considered fit to entrust it to.

He claims to be the last person to live at Te Miringa Te Kakara, the old-cross-shaped meeting-house near Te Hape which burnt down last January just before it was due to be restored. He left there in 1906 or 1907, when a new marae was built in Te Hape.

He also lifted the tapu from the old Pai Marire niu pole at Kuranui, near Matamata, before it was taken down two years ago for restoration.

Still an active and fit man, he starts the day with exercises, a light jog around the block and a shower before breakfast.

But asking how many descendants he has is just too much. There are three sons and a daughter — he lost two other daughters — but he breaks down laughing when he starts counting his grandchildren and great-grandchildren on his fingers, and settles for "round 40, I suppose, maybe more."

Te Kohanga Reo will benefit greatly from the first Maori composers hui to be held March 9, 10, 11, 12 this year at Hoani Waititi marae, Auckland. Composing a song for Te Kohanga Reo infants will be just one of the many pleasant objectives at this hui.

It's been called to inform people of their rights with copyright and other legalities, to get together information on how things are done in the music game, to look at the use of videos and the structure of waiata and also to let people know what is available in the way of funding.

The hui has four sections administration, covering legal areas to promoting technical covering studio use and equipment; traditional covering waiata structure and contemporary covering music developments today.



Pre-European village expands



Marleina Te Kanawa shows one of the existing pataka, and the cleared area which will feature new whare and pataka, with the new pourewa at the top. (Picture by Tim Koller).

Ohaki, the replica pre-European Maori village near the Waitomo caves, is expanding.

Part of a hillside of scrub has been cleared and a manuka pole stockade has been shifted from the base of the hillside to run up to a pourewa at the top.

When the expansion work is finished, the hillside will feature a number of pataka and other small buildings, village spokesperson Marleina Te

Kanawa said.

The village was built and opened in 1982 by local Maori people as a tourist attraction showing visitors something of the lifestyle of the Maori before Europeans arrived in New Zealand.

A popular feature in a nearby arts and crafts building is the work of noted weavers Rangimarie Hetet and Digger Te Kanawa, who often work there at traditional Maori items like kiwi feather cloaks.