



Left to right: Huirangi Waikerepuru, Bunny Tumai and Basil Johnson at Waimako marae, Tuai. Note the kaumatua flats in the background.

Maatatua marae is sited some distance off the tar seal and it was there my introduction to Ringatu was made for the first time.

After the formal procedures were completed, it was lectures and whaikorero right through the early hours of the morning.

A visit to the local school, tucked just off the road and surrounded by the inevitable bush, then to the Presbyterian church, which, we were informed is still used today, the influence of Ringatu notwithstanding.

Thursday arrived and it was time to head back over the same gravel road to Waimako where we were to finish off the rest of our field trip.

Comparative features noticed between the maraes of the East Coast and my tribe differs quite markedly in many respects.

Each marae seen, in most cases conformed to high standards of hygiene and the whare kai erected were in all stages of renovation.

Cooking facilities ranged from the hotplate affair normally seen in army kitchens to the outside kauta where the fuel is simply wood.

The most impressive features was the full attention given to the wharetupuna, however.

Each was richly adorned with the carvings of ancestors and taniwha pertaining to the history of that place. Tukutuku panels covered every inch of unused space, light switches and fittings were sited subtly. Te Huki,

for example, had carpet on the floor.

The maraes in Tuai had kuamatua flats, something which Waahi marae (Huntly) has.

A rich experience was gained by my attending the course and I am indebted to the Polytech staff for allowing us the opportunity to see for ourselves.

To my fellow students, ka kite i a koutou ano, ki Te Ariki, Hurangi and Roimata, kia manawanui, kia kaha ta koutou mahi akonga.

#### **Brief Coverage of our travels Te Huki Marae in Raupunga**

A short stay, but a pleasant one. A fabulous meeting house and a lively culture group.

#### **Takitimu Marae in Wairoa**

Takitimu is an awesome place, the modern facilities blending with the traditional structures set the norm for most maraes we visited. A beautiful wharetupuna.

#### **Taihoa Marae in Wairoa**

A warm place, I chanced a meeting with Piripi Kapa, the local Anglican Minister, whose boyhood days go back to Waikato and Tuakau.

#### **Te Poho-O-Te-Rehu Marae**

A sad reunion between Roimata and her whanaunga, and an enlightening experience with Cambridge Pene, the acknowledged orator of Rakai Paaka history.

#### **Kaiuku Marae in Mahia**

A remarkable event took place many years ago at Kaiuku.

The locals were besieged and forced

to sustained themselves after an attack by a war party.

That they did by eating the sod and earth within their pa, thereby surviving the siege and this is remembered by the people as an incident of courage and discipline.

#### **Kahungunu Marae in Nuhaka**

The meeting house is undergoing extensive repairs and stands isolated on a small section of land. Future intention is to build a wharekai to complement the scene.

#### **Maatatua Marae in Ruatahuna**

A shy type of people, I respected their reticence in displaying any form of over-friendliness and I probably learned more about Tuhoe and Ringatu history than I did by reading books.

This was Maori protocol at its most formal.

#### **Waimako Marae in Tuai**

We learnt just as much here, though in an informal setting.

The home of Te Ariki (Mei), three nights were spent exploring, observing, and listening. We visited Ruapani marae and Hinekura meeting house nearby. An enjoyable and relaxing time was had by all.

I recall the names of those we met on the field trip, Pano, Bruce (Aranga), Cambridge, Piripi, Te Kapua Rurehe, Whare Witana, Te Hikawera, Whare and Margaret Biddle, Pera and Brenda Tahi, Laverna, the kaumatua who welcomed us onto Takitimu and gave every assistance. He mihi ra tenei i a koutou.

There were many others whose names escape me for the time being, we salute them as well.