

TAKE A WALK

Lush bush

Fifty acres of lush native bush broken up by one or two grassed areas greet the visitor to the Ratapihi Reserve in New Plymouth.

It is only about 7km from the centre of the city yet take a walk through the bush in the company of whistling birds and you are in another world.

A metal roadway leads to a grassed area with a wooden gate at the other end.

From there firm dirt tracks lead alongside streams through clusters of ferns and nikau palms as well as native trees such

as miro, rimu and rata.

The reserve was designated as such by the late Mr W. H. Skinner in 1936 but it became well known more than 80 years earlier.

In 1855 a builder, Richard Rundle, built a schooner and later the Wanganui and Patea River bridges, from timber milled on the land. Two of the old saw pits can still be seen just off the pathways.

During the Maori wars Maoris travelling from the south to fight in the wars gathered in the reserve but several years afterwards the area was left uninhabited.

