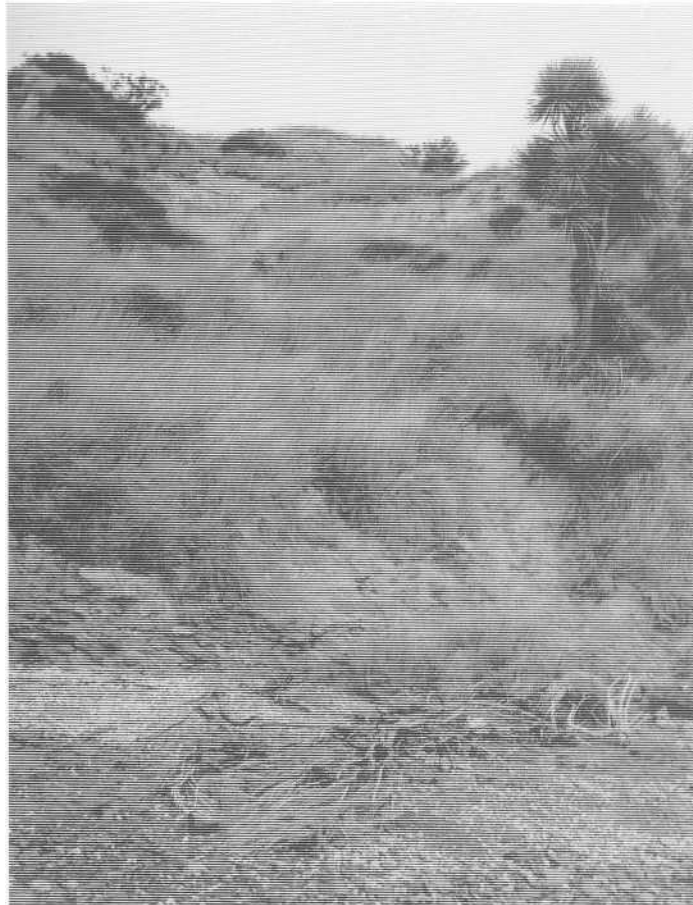


39(a)

Figure 39(a), (b) (a) Failure of grass cover on banks of Onāwe caused by compacted former sheep-rubbing areas under kānuka shade. Grass cover could be encouraged by placing driftwood logs on surface and allowing litter to build up. (b) Western slopes of Onāwe above beach, showing slumping of loess cover.



39(b)

5. CASE STUDIES: WELLINGTON

5.1 Te Kahuoterangi Whaling Settlement, (R26/6 GR 736389, N156/9), Kapiti Island.

This site is one of the largest and most intact of all settlements associated with the earliest shore whaling in New Zealand. It is reached by a rather precipitous track from Rangatira Point (the main landing place) to the northern end of the island. The site receives relatively limited numbers of visitors (300 p.a.?), most of whom would be passing through and hitherto unaware of its existence.

Plans by Ray Gilbert and others cover most of the extant surface features north of the stream and midden eroding from the north bank of the stream. Nigel Prickett (1982) recorded an additional feature, a grave, on the north side of the stream, terraces about 25 m above the inner streambed to the south, and further stone outlines or but depressions to the south of the fan and elevated beach platform. The site has been mapped in detail recently.

The site lies on a surface created by a fan of the Kahuoterangi Stream, which emerges from a steep gully about 70 m inland from the H. W. M. The fan is approximately 40 x 40 m in extent, with a noticeable grade down to the remnant uplifted beach or beach ridge, comprising the narrow coastal strip about 2000 m long and typically 15-25 m wide. The strip fronts a very steep hillslope which, until stabilised by forest, had been quite unstable and prone to erosion. There is a 3-4 m erosion scarp from the flat to the modern beach, suggesting that some erosion has been occurring at an unknown rate; also the stream bed itself is incised 2-3 m below the general level of the fan and beach ridge, although its course is straight and apparently stable. Overall, the site area is today in fairly stable geomorphological condition.

The soils on the site appear to consist of a thin layer (no more than 8 cm thick) of humus and leaf litter lying on a thin dark topsoil (less than 10 cm thick) on an angular stony substrate with some silt exposed in the track surface and in the coastal erosion scarp. The shallow level of the substrate surface suggests that foundations of structures such as the try-pots will be shallow, no more than 10 cm below the present surface. Soils are generally thicker and well formed toward the foot of the slope. Because of the human occupation, the topsoils are probably fertile but will be very droughty because of the substrate.

Site features (Figs. 40, 41)

Terraces are cut into the foot of the hill slope, south of the stream (Prickett's terraces), north of the stream, on the western slope-foot, and by the track as it rises to the north of the flat strip 150 m from the stream; the terrace treads are protected by colluvial deposits in some cases, but elsewhere their fine stratigraphy will be exposed to root damage.

Irregular stone alignments mark house floors (to south of stream), and a grave at the foot of the slope 50 m north of the stream. There are irregular stone heaps, beach-

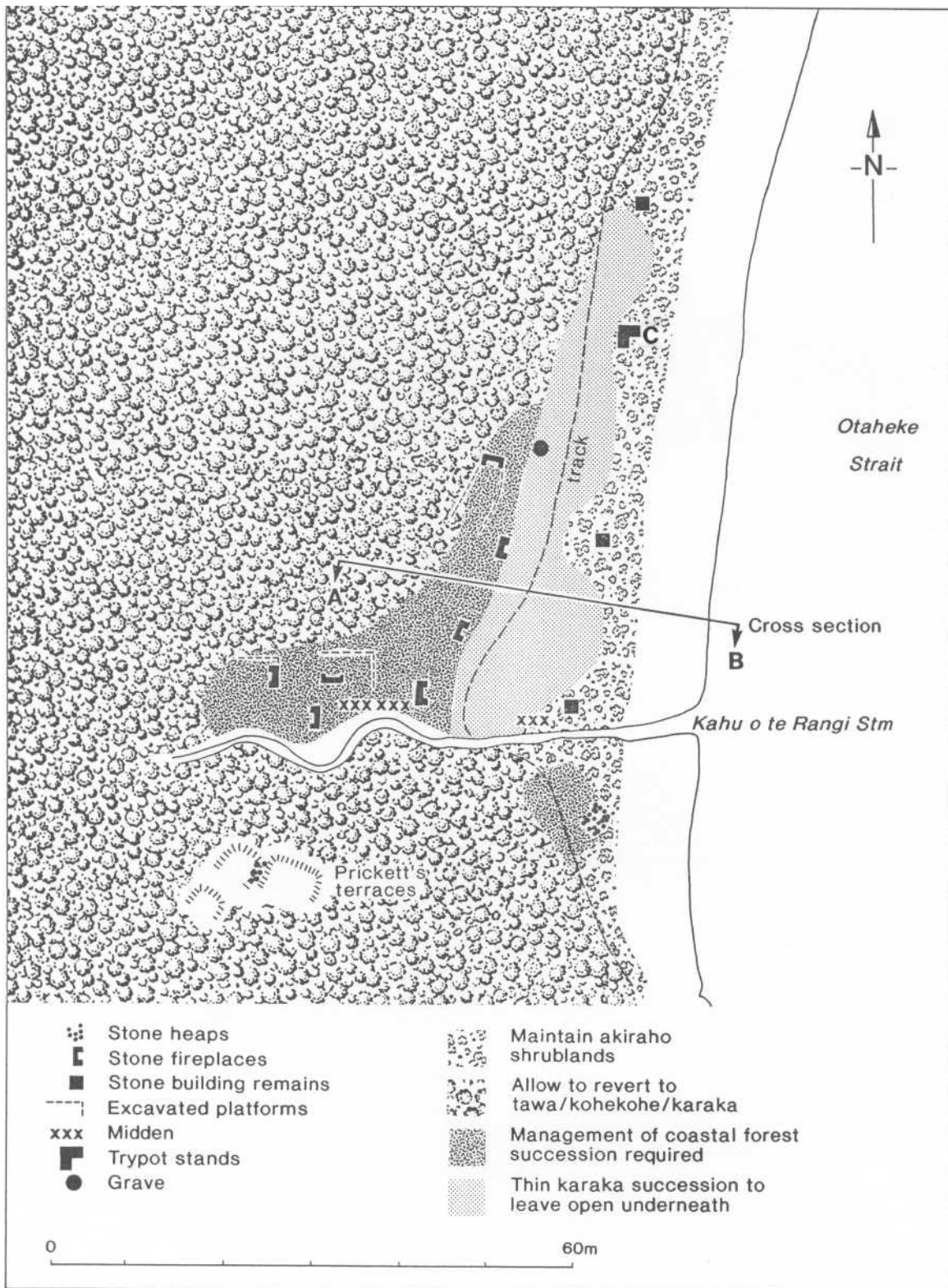


Figure 40 Plan of Kahn o Te Rangi.

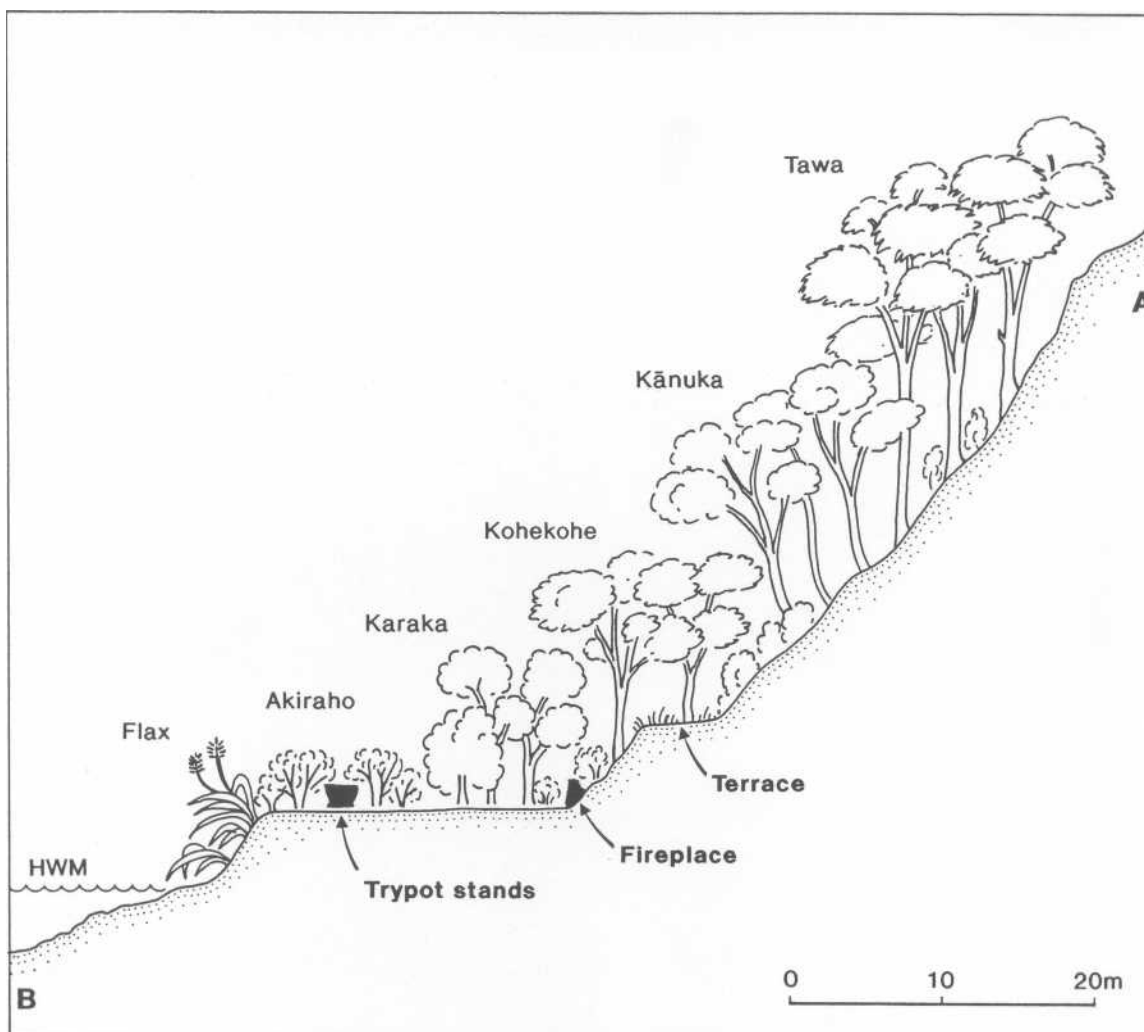


Figure 41 Kahu o Te Rangi, schematic section of vegetation succession.

boulder, stone-block and carved-pumice block fire places, some free standing, but most associated with terrace sites. There are further irregular stone heaps and clay-set stone try-pot stands, on the forward (eastern) perimeter of the site and north of the stream. A shell midden layer is exposed on the north bank of the stream. Of an unknown extent, but undoubtedly significant is an archaeological sub-surface layer covering most of the flat land on the strip. This broader and at present largely unknown element of the site is crucially important and it should be the subject of further sub-surface investigation.

Try pot structures

Try-pot C is a rounded "w" in plan form on the interior with the exterior a "u" shape in plan form. It is approximately 3600 mm wide and 1700 mm long and 900 mm high. The structure is constructed of local greywacke (a very hard, grey sandstone) beach boulders and earth mortar. It appears that the exterior of the structure was rendered with an earth render. The interior earth render of the try-pot appears to have been fired by the heat of the fire.