



Locally, let us start our journey of discovery with one obvious local point of interest.

How many of you have noticed a cluster of large stones near the Pukekohe southern off ramp at Bombay and thought - "They look like standing stones?" Well, you would be right. It took a visiting British Antiquarian to spot and draw them to Martin's attention. These stones are obelisk boulders with ancient spiral incising and five hand hewn bullauns cut into them, and are not unique. They are part of a network of such points covering the entire Auckland isthmus - and beyond. Bullauns are Neolithic ceremonial 'holy wells,' used for ritualistic cleansing found in rock structures throughout ancient Europe. (later adopted by the Christian Church as baptismal fonts.) The Bombay stones were uncovered in 1992 when engineers dug to build the Southern motorway extension. They were repositioned on farmland close to their original site, while several others were buried nearby.

Construction Superintendent, Nick Botica was told by advisors at the time that the tephra ash covering the obelisks and other component parts of the Bombay Hill structure came from the Taupo eruption of 186 AD - providing positive evidence that this site was last used over 1800 years ago. If the tephra is from Taupo, then there can be no doubt the intricate incising and bullaun bowls were created by humans over 1000 years before Maori arrived on these shores. The Taupo eruption is said to be the largest volcanic explosion in recorded history, the noise from which was heard in China. It's quite possible that shock waves and ground tremors from the massive eruption toppled the standing obelisks at the Bombay Hills. Over ensuing days or weeks beyond the eruption they were covered in a blanket of volcanic ash and not found again until Nick Botica's roading crew happened upon them in 1992.

Another intriguing fact is that there isn't a lot of stone in evidence throughout the Bombay Hills area. The landscape for miles around is layered with rich volcanic soil atop clay beds and it's very evident that this cluster of large obelisks or sizeable boulders was brought together by ancient human intervention to serve some profound structural purpose. The same 'out of place' factor has been noted with other obelisks at Red Hill in Papakura and Silverdale - and at Stonehenge in Britain. So, what could their purpose be to provoke so much effort? □



Closeup of incising at Bombay



Closeup a bullaun

*In the next edition of eLocal:  
We follow an ancient overland  
alignment of purpose built  
structures extending through the  
Auckland Isthmus. Why were  
these structures built? What is  
the true age of Rangitoto? Who  
were the people who built these  
overland structures in a dead  
straight line and what happened  
to the ancient society?*



Bullauns