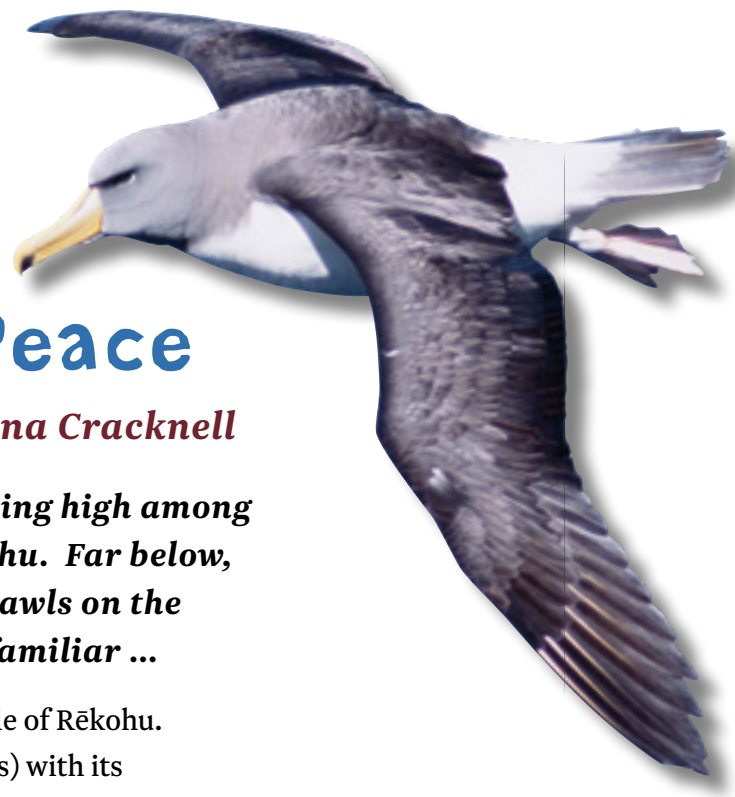


# Kopinga, a Place of Peace

*based on an interview with Mana Cracknell*

*Imagine you are an albatross, soaring high among the clouds above the island of Rēkohu. Far below, a large, white-painted building sprawls on the hillside. Its shape looks somehow familiar ...*

Kopinga Marae belongs to the Moriori people of Rēkohu. It was designed to look like a hopo (albatross) with its wings outstretched on the grass.



The hopo has great importance for Moriori. Its white feathers are a symbol of peace. In the old days, Moriori wore these feathers in their hair or beards as a sign of their belief in a peaceful way of life.

Some of the descendants of the early Moriori still live on Rēkohu. They come to the marae to learn more about their Moriori heritage.



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On the walls of the whareniui, carvings and paintings depict the legends and history of Rēkohu and its sacred bird, the hopo.

In the centre of the marae is a wooden pou, carved with the names of the 1561 Moriori men, women, and children who were alive in 1835.

Around the pou lie precious taonga – clubs, adzes, and white hopo feathers.

These are a reminder of the ancient Law of Nunuku – the vow of peace.



## Nunuku's Law

Hundreds of years ago, after fierce fighting among the tribes of Rēkohu, a chief called Nunuku called for an end to war and killing. All the chiefs of Rēkohu agreed to this.

If two people began a fight, they were allowed to strike each other with a tupuari (a wooden staff), but if either drew blood, the fighting had to stop immediately.

In 1835, when Rēkohu was invaded by tribes from New Zealand, the chiefs of Rēkohu met to decide what they should do.

After long discussion, the chiefs decided that they could not disobey Nunuku's ancient law of peace. They decided not to fight against the invasion but to share their island with the visitors.

Within a year, over two hundred Moriori men, women, and children had been killed. Many others became slaves or died in captivity.

Their names are carved on the pou at Kopinga Marae to honour their memory and their legacy of peace.





## The Kopi Tree

The marae is named after the kopi (karakā) tree. Some of the patterns carved in the pou come from ancient carvings made by Moriori in the bark of kopi trees on Rēkohu.



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based on an interview with Mana Cracknell



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Every effort has been made to contact the three unknown children on pages 10–11. Please get in touch if you have any information relating to these images.

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