



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



This document is made available by The New Zealand Archaeological Association under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

To view a copy of this license, visit
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>.

A RADIOCARBON DATE FOR RAHOPARA PA (N38/20)

AT CASTOR BAY, AUCKLAND

Janet Davidson,
Auckland Institute and Museum

A single radiocarbon date has been received for N38/20, Rahopara Pa at Castor Bay, Auckland.

Green (1970) has described the excavations at Castor Bay, carried out as part of a project to ensure the preservation of this, one of the few remaining headland pa on the mainland near Auckland. As a result of the excavations he was able to show that the construction of the ditch and bank which formed the "promontory pa" at Castor Bay was a relatively late event in the history of the site, and that there had been an earlier occupation during which a terraced settlement probably extended over the whole headland.

The charcoal sample which has been dated came from a haangi in the south-western corner of square K-18. The haangi is sealed by layer 5 and was assigned to the earlier occupation.

The result is quoted by the Institute of Nuclear Sciences as follows:

NZ 1762

$\delta^{13}\text{C}$ wrt PDB $-26.0^{\circ}/\text{oo}$

$\triangle^{14}\text{C}$ wrt 0.95 Oxalic Acid $- 48 \pm 6^{\circ}/\text{oo}$

Percentage Modern: $95.4 \pm 6\%$

^{14}C age wrt 0.95 Ox.Ac. (old half life, uncorrected for secular effects) 378 ± 60 B.P.

The laboratory advises that the best result is probably that calculated using the new half life and corrected for secular effects. This result is 458 ± 60 years B.P.

There are very few carbon dates for archaeological sites in the Auckland area. The only other date from a mainland site is the single result from Mount Wellington of A.D. 1430 ± 30 (old half life

uncorrected) (Golson 1961). Other dates are available for Motutapu Island (Davidson 1972). The result from Castor Bay is comparable to the Mount Wellington result, and suggests that occupation of terraced hill sites may have been extensive during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

REFERENCES

- Davidson, Janet M. 1972 Archaeological Investigations on Motutapu Island, New Zealand. Introduction to recent fieldwork and further results. Rec. Auckland Inst. Mus. 9: 1: 14.
- Golson, Jack 1961 A Radiocarbon Date from Mt Wellington. N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, 4 (2): 51.
- Green, Roger C. 1970 Investigations at Castor Bay Point Pa, Takapuna, New Zealand. N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, 13 (1): 2-22.