



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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by D. W. Robinson

Four miles south along the coast from the WAINGONGORO River lie two fresh water spring-fed lakes, OKORAE and WHITIANGA. These lakes drain to the sea by seepage over a deep papa layer which is overlaid by sand dune or sand/clay build up. It is on these sand dunes lying between the lakes and the 200 foot high coastal cliffs that evidence of a Moa eating community have been found. The site has been recorded in the site recording scheme as N129/104.

The relative closeness of this site to that recorded by A. G. Buist at the WAINGONGORO is noteworthy. Reference to the accompanying map will also show the relative proximity of the find-spot of the archaic adze (Duff 4A) owned by Mr Reeves of Hawera, and referred to elsewhere in this issue. The find-spot is on the right bank of the Tangahoe River on sandhills close to the mouth.

At this stage insufficient investigation has been done to show whether the site had any lengthy archaic occupation, indeed any archaic occupation at all; or whether it was of a transitory "camp" nature. In later times the area was occupied by the HAMUA HAPU of the TANGAHOE tribe.

Most of the evidence has been located in wind blown areas in the sandhills, where hangis containing burnt Moa bone fragments have been exposed. Fortunately, some fragments are sufficiently large for positive identification (by Ron Scarlett when he visited the site in 1961). Materials so far recovered from eroded or exposed areas are as follows:-

| | |
|--|--------|
| Moa bone fragments (burnt) | 1/2 lb |
| Whole Moa bones (very decayed) | 2 |
| Charcoal sand mixture containing grease | 2 lb |
| Large obsidian flake knives | 5 |
| Small obsidian flake knives | 70 |
| Core stones of obsidian | 11 |
| Waste flakes of obsidian | 174 |
| Chert flake knife (small) | 1 |
| Chert waste chips | 4 |
| Chips off adzes or other polished stone tools (all greywacke) | 21 |
| Large chip of grey baked argillite which could be a small adze "rough-out" | 1 |

As the major part of this material has been recovered from the sand and clay "natural bed" below sandhills, items from all strata are mixed. It is likely therefore that the flakes of polished stone and some of the obsidian could derive from later occupations, although it is certain that the hangis are at the lowest level.

Continuing erosion of the sea cliffs make an early excavation necessary on a scale sufficient to establish definitely:-

- (a) the authenticity of the site as one where Moa consumption took place, whether by archaic people or Classic Maoris;
- (b) the extent and stratigraphy of the occupation if possible.

