



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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A SUMMARY OF CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH
IN NEW ZEALAND AND THE PACIFIC

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AUCKLAND

During the summer of 1971-72 Janet Davidson (Auckland Institute and Museum) and Jim McKinlay directed eight weeks of salvage excavations on the large volcanic cone of Mount Wellington. Parts of two large terraces, which have subsequently been damaged by a new road, were investigated. The terraces were on the outer slope of the mountain immediately below the area excavated by Golson and others in 1960.

Cross-sections were obtained through the two terraces and their adjacent scarps. On both terraces rectangular pits of various sizes were discovered. A feature of the excavation was the discovery of stone facings in some pits and a stone pavement. There was no evidence of palisading anywhere in the area investigated.

During August 1971 Janet Davidson investigated two other areas on the site which were also threatened by roading proposals. Some small pits on the crater rim were also found to have stone facings. A flat area, low down on the western side of the mountain, appeared to be an agricultural area bounded by two low artificial stone walls. Two completely filled rectangular pits and one haangi were found in this area, but no midden at all, in strong contrast to other areas of the site.

The complexity of deposits on Mount Wellington contrasted with the very restricted evidence of occupation revealed at Kauri Point Pa, Birkenhead, on which Janet Davidson carried out test excavations in Easter 1971. This headland pa, with strong natural defences, seemed to have been occupied only once, probably for a short period of time.

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

Wilfred Shawcross returned to Mount Camel, the site of an early occupation, for a short period of time during the summer of 1971-72. A further large amount of midden was obtained and is now being analyzed.

Richard Cassels last summer excavated part of a prehistoric village on a hill slope at Aotea, on the west coast of the Waikato. Houses, pits, and a cooking area with some kind of related structure were uncovered together with most of the material from the rubbish dumps associated with the house cluster.

Additional work was done on a project, to last several years, to gather information on the modern shellfish population of the Aotea Harbour. An extensive midden sampling programme was also undertaken.

Next summer Richard hopes to return to the Aotea site to complete the area excavation, to survey more of the prehistoric field systems and to obtain more samples for environmental studies.

The Cook Islands Research Programme. Peter Bellwood, his wife Tere and Debbie Cluff (University of Auckland) returned to the Cooks in May for a further three months. They have excavated an early site in Avarua and a more recent one in Maungaroa Valley on Rarotonga in both cases uncovering complete house-plans. They are now engaged in a survey of the Northern Cook Islands which will include Peurhyn and Pukapuka. Peter will leave Auckland at the end of the year to take up a lectureship at the newly established Undergraduate School of Pacific Studies at A.N.U., Canberra.

Karel Peters, in the summer and August vacations, supervised a site recording programme on the North Head of the Kaipara Harbour. The programme was initiated in response to a proposal to plan a large part of the Head as part of a forest-farming scheme, and carried out for the Historic Places Trust. Intensive studies of a number of site complexes will be made in the summer of 1972-73.

Pamela Swadling is completing a thesis entitled: "Shellfish Gathering in Prehistoric New Zealand". Her main concern has been to isolate changes in shellfish populations due to either human exploitation patterns or to natural phenomena. Pamela leaves New Zealand shortly to take up a six-month appointment as Research Assistant with the University of Papua and New Guinea. She will carry out an archaeological survey of the Arona Valley, Eastern Highlands District.

Geoff Irwin completed his thesis on Shortland Island pottery collected during a period of research there in 1971. He left in April this year to begin Ph.D. studies at the Australian National University and is now working on the Papuan South Coast of New Guinea.

Ian Harnett's thesis work is on the North Head of the Kaipara Harbour where he is using locational analysis and patterns of shellfish exploitation to draw conclusions on the human ecology of the area.

Agnes Sullivan is investigating the Wiri-McLaughlin's stone wall complex, 17 miles south of Auckland. The site originally covered 700 acres and is still in a state of fairly good preserve. So far work has included a plane table survey of surface remains and the excavation of selected features. Investigations will probably continue in the summer of 1972-73 and assistance on excavations and other projects will be welcomed. (Write: Mrs A. Sullivan, Department of Anthropology, University of Auckland, Private Bag, Auckland.)

Debbie Cluff has concentrated her thesis research on pigs. At present working in the Cook Islands with Peter Bellwood, she plans to further her interest in pigs in the near future.

UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO

Wairarapa.

The Wairarapa research programme began in August 1969 and is under the direction of Foss and Helen Leach. The final phase of fieldwork takes place in August 1972. A 300-page monograph on the programme is planned for 1973.

Foss Leach is examining the prehistoric communities of the Makotukutuku Valley whose activities span the period 1100-1600 A.D. He has excavated nine site components over a distance of three miles, one of which was particularly rich in cultural and environmental information.

Helen Leach is completing a programme designed to elucidate aspects of prehistoric horticulture in the area. This has involved excavations and sampling at ten major locations along a 15-mile stretch of coastline, and the surveying of the extensive stone wall systems of the area. The radiocarbon dates indicate the use of these walls predominantly during the 12th to 14th Centuries.

Gaela Mair has finished a thesis entitled: "The Protohistoric Period of Wairarapa Culture History", which synthesizes a vast body of records including those of the Maori Land Courts and covers a crucial period of rapid cultural change in the area.

Doug Sutton is working on skeletal material recovered in the Makotukutuku Valley. He is interested in providing as complete a description of these people as possible, including their age, structure, sex, standard of health, stature, as well as considering their physical relationship with the environment.

Atholl Anderson has completed excavations of four midden sites at Black Rocks Point in Palliser Bay. Excavation has been accompanied by marine surveys in an attempt to understand more fully the implications of food refuse in terms of cultural behaviour.

Kathy Walls is exploring the geological knowledge of prehistoric Palliser Bay peoples from an analysis of stone tools and waste material recovered in the excavations of other members of the team as well and from some surface collecting.

Nigel Prickett, having completed excavations of a house site in a village complex in the Moikau Valley and an intensive survey of field features, is examining the domestic unit and our archaeological and ethnological understanding of its varying forms and uses. He is especially concerned with the setting of houses in the prehistoric landscape.

Other research

Graeme Ward's thesis is concerned with the sourcing of New Zealand obsidian using the X-ray fluorescence method. By this technique he has identified 18 major sources and 48 minor sources of obsidian. Stuart Park's thesis contains an examination of the role of factor analysis in the study of New Zealand adze material. Using this method, the Duff classification is compared with that of Skinner. Master's theses which are almost completed include those of Kevin Jones whose interest is in stone flake debris in New Zealand sites. He is investigating the manner in which flake material varies from one activity to another in prehistoric sites, and also the role of rock-type to stone flake morphology. Rachael Baskerville is using library and museum sources in an analysis of the hypotheses of Melanesian influence which have been applied to New Zealand. Steven Bagley is examining the maritime knowledge and canoe technology of the Maori.

Future research at Otago will continue on two fronts: South-east Asia and New Zealand. In New Zealand there are plans for two three-year research programmes to begin early in 1973, one in the Chatham Islands directed by Foss Leach, and the other in Central Otago organized by Helen Leach.

NORTH-EAST THAILAND

Both Donn Bayard and Ham Parker have been excavating in Thailand for some years. Their current work includes the following topics: the nature and development of rice and other plant domesticates in the area; the origins and antiquity of domestic cattle and possibly pigs, which may date back to the mid-4th Millenium in the region; changes in ecological orientation over some five to six thousand years in one particular locality of North-east Thailand; the development and technology of an apparently independent bronze metallurgy at a date considerably earlier than China or India; the origins and spread of wet rice cultivation in the area; the rise of 'urban civilization' which seems to pre-date the onset of Indian influence in both Central and North-east Thailand.

Angela Stapleton's M.A. thesis presents a detailed report of the ethno-archaeology of pottery and villages in North-east Thailand. Rosemary Buchan has nearly completed the research for her thesis on the pottery styles and temper of several prehistoric sites in North-east Thailand.

SOUTHLAND

Jill Hamel's research topic for her Ph.D. is 'The ecology of man and his environment at Papatowai, Southland'. Excavations have been concentrated on moa-hunter refuse deposits. Her research has been wide-ranging, from the analysis of modern flora and fauna to investigations of computer methods for species identification of fragmentary moa-bones.

N.Z.A.A. SITE RECORDING SCHEME

Central filekeeper, John Daniels, reports that recording is being carried out in Northland, Auckland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Taranaki, Canterbury and Otago. Over a thousand sites have been recorded in the Bay of Plenty due largely to the efforts of Ken Moore. The most pressing need for recording is in the rich areas of Wanganui and Hawkes Bay.

THE SOUTH-EAST SOLOMON ISLANDS CULTURE HISTORY PROGRAMME

The programme began in May 1970, based on awards granted to Roger Green (James Cook Fellow) and Douglas Yen of the Bernice P. Bishop Museum, Hawaii. The project was conceived as an intra-disciplinary

approach focused on a single region, the Eastern District of the British Solomon Islands which encompasses two main groups of islands: the eastern islands of the Solomons chain including San Cristobel, Ugi, Ulawa, Santa Ana and Santa Catalina; and the Outer Islands including the Santa Cruz and Reef Island groups, the Duffs, Tikopia, Anuta, Utupua and Vanikolo. Projects undertaken so far are a reconnaissance survey of the entire Eastern District by Roger Green (Auckland Institute and Museum); test excavations to identify the Mendana site in Graciosa Bay, Santa Cruz, by Jim Allen (University of Papua and New Guinea); a study of carvers, carvings and material culture of the Santa Ana and Star Harbour area by Sydney Mead (University of Auckland); excavations in three of the eight Lapita complex sites, two in the Main Reef Islands and one on Santa Cruz by Roger Green; mapping and test excavation of a late prehistoric village settlement on Santa Ana by Pamela Swadling (University of Auckland); a study of languages in the Outer Eastern Islands, especially Utupua by Christine Cashmore (University of Auckland) with additional data by Green and Yen on Anuta, Pileni and the Duff Island languages; survey and mapping of agricultural systems in the Outer Eastern Islands and in Kolobangara by Douglas Yen; a survey of swamps suitable for pollen analysis in the Eastern District by Jocelyn Powell (University of Papua and New Guinea); a survey of former settlements and agricultural systems on Ulawa by Gilbert Hendren (Harvard University); the excavation of three sites in the Makira District: a late prehistoric settlement at Na Mugha, Star Harbour; a late 16th Century Spanish settlement at Pamua, Central Bauro, and a long-term occupation in Su'ene village, Ugi, by Roger Green and Michael Kasho (University of Hawaii); the excavation of sites with agricultural associations: one on Kolobangara with wet terracing, one on Anuta with dry terracing, and one inland on Santa Cruz by Douglas Yen with Patrick Kirch (Yale University) and Paul Rosendahl (Bernice P. Bishop Museum); the excavation of two village settlements on Ulawa by Graeme Ward (University of Otago); additional excavations in the Makira District: further excavations at the Su'ena site on Ugi and at the Feru site on Santa Ana excavated by William Davenport in 1966 and the excavation of an old village at Kahula, Taumaku, Duff Islands, by Roger Green; additional pollen sampling of the three best swamp sites and the collection of relevant plant material to be used in their interpretation by Jocelyn Powell, (U.P.N.G.); the collection of plants used in custom medical treatment by Douglas Yen during all the periods he was in the Solomon Islands, aided by various other participants in the project.

Reports of various aspects of the work are now beginning to appear in print while others are in press or in preparation.

FIJI

Fiji Museum. A site complex in the Upper Sigatoka Valley was excavated in July 1972 by Bruce Palmer, Kolinio Moce and Fergus Clunie. The site comprised caves with petroglyphs, stone walls, mounds, graves and a deeply stratified deposit outside one of the caves from which some plain pot sherds similar to Lapita plain ware were recovered. The results of this excavation are expected to throw light on the extent of inland penetration in antiquity.

The two main areas of present research are Gau Island and Sigatoka. The programme of location and mapping of sites will continue for the rest of the year. Preparation of site reports for the Wakaya and Joske's Thumb excavations were completed during the year.

AUSTRALIA

Jim Specht (Curator of Anthropology, Australian Museum) is planning further research on prehistoric trading systems in the Vitiaz Straits and the entry of man into New Britain. Jack Golson and Wal Ambrose (A.N.U.) are carrying out investigations in the Upper Wahgi Valley, New Guinea, into prehistoric agricultural systems. This will involve the detailed recording of prehistoric ditching patterns and associated settlement areas and land use.

Les Groube is working in the southern New Hebrides.

NEW GUINEA

Sue Bulmer (U.P.N.G.) will conduct excavations at the Taurama Village site. This is aimed at filling out the settlement sequence in the Port Moresby area.

Jocelyn Powell (U.P.N.G.) will participate in the Upper Wahgi Valley project, collecting details of swamp stratigraphy, macrofossil and pollen remains.

Gabrielle Johnston (U.P.N.G.) is conducting a survey of archaeological sites near Marshall Lagoon. She is also working with the Hula people of Hood Peninsula collecting archaeological information to support oral traditions.