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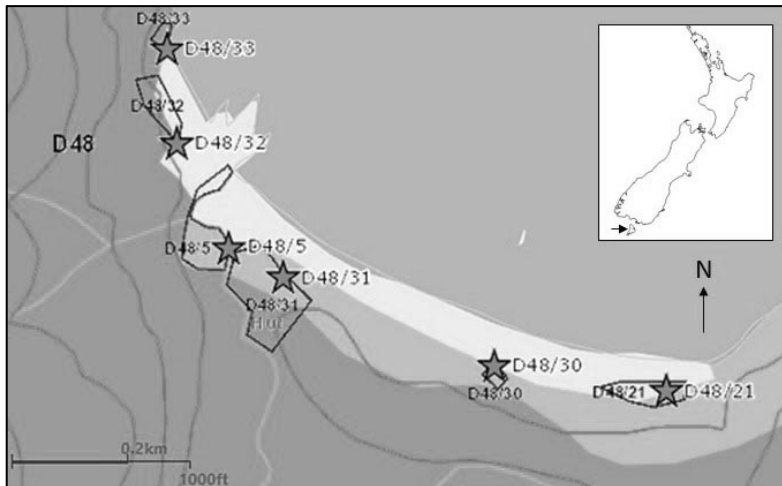
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## **The Value of Records: Archaeological Monitoring and Investigation on Whenua Hou.**

**Brooke Tucker** (*University of Otago*)

### **Introduction**

This report presents a summary of field work carried out on Whenua Hou in 2019, outlining monitoring of known archaeological sites and the identification and recording of several new sites. Existing records for Whenua Hou exemplified several of the historical issues associated with the development of the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA) Site Recording Scheme (SRS) and the digital transfer to the ArchSite platform, including ‘missing’ ArchSite numbers, silent files, incomplete records, and ‘lost’ files. In 2019 the NZAA Walton Fund provided a grant towards field work focused on ensuring that the information in the SRS for Whenua Hou was current and relevant to management of the island landscape.



*Figure 1. Recorded archaeological sites, Sealers Bay, Whenua Hou (ArchSite 8 November 2018).*

Whenua Hou lies 3 km off the northwest coast of Stewart Island/Rakiura, in Foveaux Strait (Figure 1). In 2019, there were seven recorded archaeological sites for the island, including one silent file (Smith and Anderson 2007,

Tucker 2017). Excavations at D48/5 Sealers Bay Camp Areas 1 and 4 (Smith and Anderson 2009, Anderson 2017), have demonstrated early, sustained Māori occupation of the island. Whenua Hou also has cultural significance to Ngāi Tahu as a waypoint during the tītī (Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*) harvest, and as the location of a bicultural settlement – the most recent occupation layer in D48/5 - to which many members of the iwi trace ancestral connections (Middleton 2007, Anderson 2014). The archaeological sites in Sealers and Penguin Bays reflect this varied past and include middens, ovens, domestic features, pre and post contact artefacts, shipwreck debris, a potential still, and a traditional urupa.

Due to the remote location of the island and access restrictions related to its contemporary status as a nature reserve, monitoring of the condition of known archaeological sites has been limited. Most people who visit Whenua Hou do so in an environmental capacity, and prior to archaeological work on the island in conjunction with the Whenua Hou Diving Petrel (WHDP) Project, site records had not been updated for a decade (Tucker 2017; Tucker and Fischer 2018).

## **2019 Archaeological Monitoring**

Monitoring of recorded sites over two consecutive field seasons with the WHDP project (2017-2018) documented the mobile nature of the dunes in Sealers Bay and identified newly exposed features within D48/5 (Figure 2), which became the focus of a proposed salvage excavation (Tucker 2018) and interim site protection works. In 2019, objectives during a third field season included:

- Monitoring of recorded sites
- Ongoing assessment of dune condition and coastal erosion in relation to sites in Sealers Bay
- Location of ‘lost’ site in Penguin Bay (noted on the Southland File Card Index as an incomplete record ‘artefact find’, site record misplaced).
- Investigation of potential site in Roderiques Bay

The 2019 survey was carried out 4-11 September by Brooke Tucker, with assistance from Johannes Fischer, in conjunction with fieldwork for the Whenua Hou Diving Petrel project.

Monitoring of known sites followed procedures employed in previous years. Sites were visited and photographed, with any new features or artefacts

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recorded. As per 2017-2018, photographs were taken for D48/5 and D48/32 to compare directly with baseline monitoring images from the Whenua Hou Conservation Plan (Egerton 2016). In Sealers Bay the dune base was recorded using a Trimble GPS, and active bird burrows were examined for evidence of redeposited cultural material (Fischer and Tucker 2020: 7). Finally, acting upon documentary research, several new locations were investigated in the field.



*Figure 2. Two distinct cultural layers visible in the eastern bank of Hydro Creek, Sealers Bay, D48/5 Area 1, 9 September 2018 (Photo: Brooke Tucker).*

## **Results**

D48/21 (urupa/oven/midden), D48/30 (midden), D48/31 (midden/oven)

As in previous years, undertaking dune work in conjunction with the WHDP study facilitated the observation of the eastern end of Sealers Bay in a non-intrusive manner. Inspection of burrows along the length of the dune face meant that blowouts and eroding dune caps were examined several times. No evidence of cultural material was visible, and the back dirt from all active burrows was culturally sterile (Figure 3). Monitoring the dunes over 3 years

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enabled specific measurement of erosion in some areas. In 1981, marram grass survey pegs were placed at 50 m intervals along the dunes in Sealers Bay, measured from the western end of the dune face (Johnson 1981). When originally recorded, the locations of D48/21 and D48/30 were described with reference to nearby marram grass survey pegs (800 m and 500 m respectively). However, by September 2017 only one survey peg remained in its original position at 200 m (Tucker 2017: 43), while another eroded peg (350 m) was discovered in the mobile dune face in September 2018. In January 2019, the 200 m marker peg was exposed in the dune edge and was found on the beach in September 2019. The loss of up to a metre of dune within a 24-month period at an otherwise stable, densely vegetated location illustrates ongoing attrition by tide and storm surge, with much greater mobility in the steeper, looser dunes near the urupa.



*Figure 3. Survey of dune face and WHDP burrows (2019) in relation to archaeological sites in Sealers Bay, Whenua Hou (Image: Jessie Hurford).*



*Figure 4. Monitoring dune movement with reference to eroding marram grass survey pegs. Sealers Bay, Whenua Hou, January 2019 (Photo: Brooke Tucker).*

D48/5 (Sealers Bay Camp/oven/midden)

Interim site protection installed in January 2019 had successfully prevented further erosion of the eastern bank of Hydro Creek, Area 1, over winter (Figure 5). For the first time in three consecutive field seasons, erosion was noted along the coastal margin of the site in Area 2, where loss of the matrix at the base of a stand of flax (Figure 6) exposed lithics, bone, charcoal, metal and a clay pipe stem. This visible cultural layer, located near squares A1 and A2 excavated by Smith and Anderson (2007: Figure 11) is likely to be similar to the excavated assemblage interpreted as the remnants of historic occupation redeposited from the hillside on top of an earlier precontact site (Smith and Anderson 2007, 2009). Erosion at this part of the site will require ongoing monitoring.



*Figure 5. Looking towards the mouth of Hydro Creek: the sand deposited and scoured between Jan– Sept 2019, after the installation of site protection for the eastern bank (true right), D48/5 Area 1 (Photo: Brooke Tucker).*



*Figure 6. September 2019 D48/5 Area 2, Sealers Bay, Whenua Hou, cultural layer exposed at the base of a flax stand (Photo: Brooke Tucker). This image can be compared to Smith and Anderson (2007: Figure 11) for proximity to excavation squares from 2007.*

D48/32 (shipwreck debris), D48/22 (missing record), D48/84 (artefact find - new record)

The boulder bank at Penguin Bay was examined, but no historic debris noted other than the metal bracket previously recorded in 2017 (Tucker and Fischer 2018). Research has identified that this bay was also the location of artefact finds in August 1981, when Ida Collett picked up an argillite adze preform and argillite pebble on the rocky shore. Site record D48/22 was created, but not completed, in 1982 by Lynette Williams (then anthropologist at the Southland Museum) and noted as ‘Artefact Finds’ in the Southland SRS Card File Index (Egerton pers com). During the SRS Upgrade, prior to the transfer of paper records to ArchSite, D48/22 was found to be incomplete. It was sent to the creator to be finalised, but was subsequently lost (Williams pers com), and not included in the digital data transfer.

The missing site record was noted when following up a silent file (D48/23) for Whenua Hou (see Tucker 2017 for discussion). At that time, ArchSite contained records for D48/21 and D48/24, but nothing in between. Given that D48/21 and (subsequently) D48/23 were both found to be on Whenua Hou, and that artefacts were known to have been recovered on the island during the 1980s (Middleton 2007:66-67), it seemed possible that the missing D48/22 ‘Artefact Finds’ from the File Index might also relate to the island. Accordingly, enquiries were made at many museums for catalogued artefacts from Whenua Hou. As it turned out, there were only two – Te Papa Tongawera had a chert flake collected by Captain Bollons (Austin pers com), and Rakiura Museum held an adze preform and pebble (Figures 7 and 8) with provenance to D48/22, Penguin Bay, Codfish Island (Whenua Hou). Originally catalogued at the Southland Museum (Dudfield pers com), custody was granted to the Rakiura Museum, where the items were catalogued by Wendy Harsant during the 1980s (Massey pers com). Cross referencing this data with Ministry of Culture and Heritage records (Stenner pers com) enabled the identification of approximate site location and the ‘recreation’ of site record D48/22, which has now been added to ArchSite. The general location of the finds was inspected during fieldwork on Whenua Hou in September 2019, and a new site record (D48/84) created for additional data to preserve the history and process within the SRS and avoid obscuring or confusing information. During the 1960s, two adzes were also found on the high-water mark at Penguin Bay but were returned ‘to the bush (not too far in) up on the terrace behind the creek’ (Smith pers com). It is possible that this material is related to that recorded by D48/22, but not conclusive.





Figure 7. Adze preform (argillite) Z 3327 found at Penguin Bay, Whenua Hou, originally recorded by site record form D48/22 (Photo: Rakiura Museum, Stewart Island, Johannah Massey).

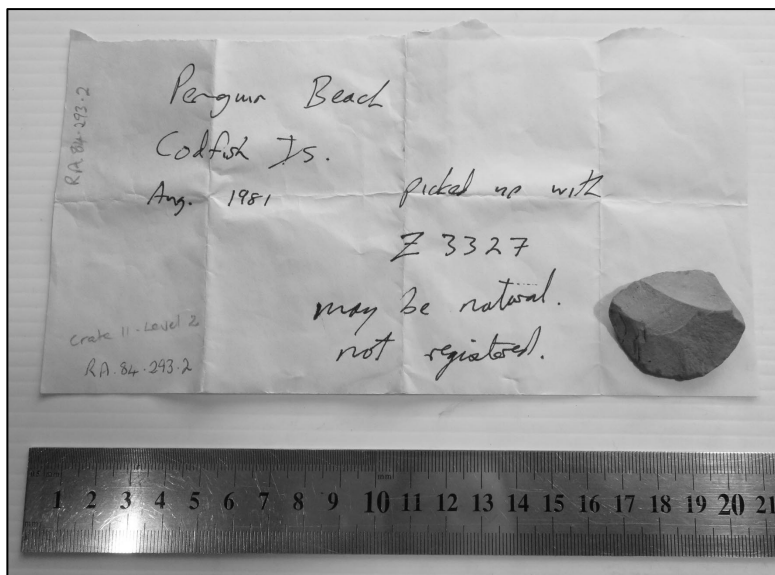
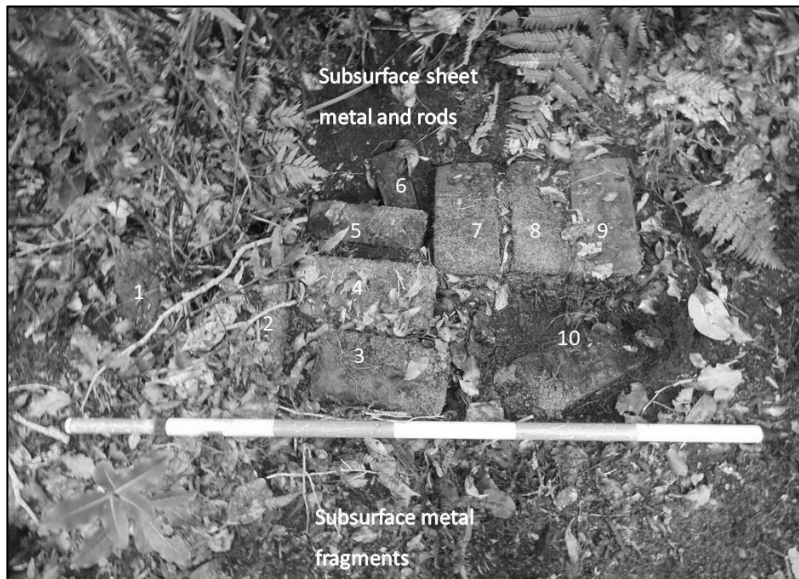


Figure 8. Argillite pebble associated with Z 3327, originally recorded by site record form D48/22 (Photo: Rakiura Museum, Stewart Island, Brooke Tucker).

D48/33 (still)

Additional artefacts were recorded at this location with subsequent field visits. In 2018 a metal barrel band was identified near the bricks recorded in 2017 (Tucker and Fischer 2018). Additionally, a stream close by at the edge of the headland was found to contain a further ten bricks in a pool at the base of a small waterfall. In September 2019, investigation of the brick feature on the headland revealed a more substantial structure. Temporarily removing brick #6 to examine for manufacturer marks (there were none) revealed that the feature consisted of five layers of regularly stacked bricks (one above and four below ground) with protruding metal rods, a subsurface cavity and a section of burnt wood approximately 15 cm in length. Probing revealed subsurface metal fragments and sheet metal on either side of the brick feature (Figure 9). The stump of a felled tree was also recorded as part of the activity associated with the area.



*Figure 9. Brick feature D48/33, Whenua Hou, September 2019 (Image: Brooke Tucker).*

D48/83 (engraved tree – new record)

The engraved tree is referred to in Section 2.6.5 of the Conservation Plan for Whenua Hou (Egerton 2016) where it is mentioned briefly as a memorial to an unknown individual. Approaching Roderiques Anchorage via Roderiques track, the tree is found on the right side of the track immediately above the descent to the rocky beach. The name and dates are carved on the side of the trunk facing the ocean, and the inscription ‘R. Hart/1894/1950’ (Figure 10) is



most obvious when entering the forest from the coast. The tree was visited in September 2019 and a GPS location point recorded.

*Figure 10.  
D48/83 Engraved tree ‘R. Hart/1894/1950’, Roderiques Bay, Whenua Hou, September 2019 (Photo: Brooke Tucker).*

The Hart family travelled on the *Zealandia* to New Zealand from England and settled in Riverton during the 1870s, where they were boat builders. Robert Hart was born in 1876. Robert’s

sister Elizabeth married Captain Joe Roderique (Green pers com) whose family briefly held a pastoral lease for Codfish Island (Whenua Hou) in the 1890s (Middleton 2007:39). Robert’s brother Frederick Hart married Grace Howell, daughter of George and Isabella Howell, granddaughter of Captain John Howell and his first wife Kohikohi of Centre Island (Rarotoka). Frederick and Grace Hart had eight surviving children (Wilson 1976). One of their sons had a son ALSO named Robert Hart, probably born in the 1930s, who was a fisherman out of Bluff (Stevens pers com). While the engraving cannot be definitively associated with either R. Hart, and the dates are not related to the birth of either Robert, they may record two visits to the island by Robert Hart of Riverton, or even one visit each by both Robert Harts. Whenua Hou was a common stop off point for fisherman into the 1960s and Roderiques Anchorage is still visited by paua divers (although landing is

prohibited). The engraving seems likely to be associated with several Māori and Pākehā families from the region who have close connections with the island.

## **Conclusions**

An on-going programme of research and regular archaeological monitoring on Whenua Hou between 2017-2019 has facilitated the maintenance of records in the NZAA SRS and added to the inventory of the island's archaeological heritage. Accelerating erosion at a significant archaeological site has been identified and acted upon. Six existing records have been regularly updated, a missing record 'recreated' and two new site records generated. Of equal importance is ongoing interaction with the Whenua Hou Komiti and the Department of Conservation regarding the relevance and value of the Site Recording Scheme. Keeping content up to date and accessible is vital for the preservation and management of heritage landscapes, even those 'off the beaten track'.

## **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to the Whenua Hou Komiti and the Department of Conservation Te Papa Atawhai for granting access to Whenua Hou and for continuing to support archaeological monitoring on the island. Field equipment was provided by the Archaeology Programme, University of Otago. Thanks to Johannes Fischer for collaborative fieldwork, to Jessie Hurford for Figure 3, and to the many people who shared and discussed unpublished information included in this report.

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