



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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10. The Craigmore "Moas" are illustrated in:
"Arts Year Book 6:6; Gillespie, "South Canterbury - a record
of settlement" plate f.p. 16.
11. Stevenson, G.B.
"Maori and Pakeha in North Otago": 13. 1947.
12. Duff R.
"Postscript" to Waitaki Report in N.H.P.T. "Annual Report"
for 1958: page 24.
13. For experiments overseas, see Kurt Herberts, "Artists
Techniques" 1958.
14. Ambrose and Davis
"Interim report on the recording of Maori Rock Shelter Art
at Benmore".
N.H.P.T. "Annual Report" for 1958.
15. Schoon, Theo.
"New Zealand's Oldest Art Galleries"
"N.Z. Listener", No. 429: 6-7, 12 Sept. 1947.
16. Duff R.
"Report on Native Rock drawings of South Canterbury".
Unpublished report for South Canterbury Historical Society, 1946.

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Editor's Note:

The above report was submitted to the Regional Committee of The National Historic Places Trust in 1960. Mr. Fomison is to prepare a final report to be published in the near future.

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AN EARLY EXPLORATION OF N.Z.SHELTER DRAWINGS

by Theo Schoon

Editor's Note:

The following is a digest of a manuscript of Theo Schoon relating to his fieldwork in 1947.

Theo Schoon was struck forcibly with the possible significance of what appeared to him to be primitive art in the records of Dr. Ellmore in the Otago Museum. Dr. Ellmore had much earlier recovered specimens from shelters by removing the whole drawing and surrounding

rock intact. "He had seen the disastrous effects of rubbing cattle and vandalism, and he offered to remove some of the more interesting drawings to the custody of the four main New Zealand museums. Two of the museums accepted, the others declined. The charge of attempting to smuggle the drawings out of the country was never substantiated, and those who criticised Dr. Ellmore so fiercely had apparently done nothing whatever towards the protection of the drawings."

Theo Schoon then decided to investigate on his own behalf and spent some £150. in doing so. He realised the urgency of the task in view of the destruction of the shelters and, having no further money, he sought the aid of the Internal Affairs Department. Roger Duff, of the Canterbury Museum, acted as advisor to the Government and an arrangement was made whereby the artist would be paid for copying the paintings at the rate of one guinea a board. From this fee he "had to travel, eat, buy heavy cardboard, oil, paint, camping gear, write out reports and notes, and do photography. The Canterbury Museum were to become the custodians of all drawings, notes, negatives and photographs."

He continued recording for some twelve months, supplementing his income by doing portraits of farmers' children and other paintings. "During this time I had seen and learned enough to know that no complete survey had ever been made....I wanted to prove that by probing rocky country on all the main rivers and lakes in the South Island I would find a great many more. It meant that I had to make serious gambles. If I did not find anything I would not even get the small fee....But my fascination for these drawings had grown so much that I threw all caution to the winds. In Southland the privations really started to tell." He then fell ill as a result of living in the cold shelters and was picked up and nursed by a local farmer who employed him until he had enough money to move on to the Nelson-Buller area, recording the Kaikoura drawings on the way, "but soon learned that searching such country would be more than I could tackle on the means available."

He returned to Christchurch and being unable to continue the contract for various reasons as well as ill-health induced the privations of field-work, he moved to the North Island. "...working as a labourer in any district I wanted to search, and spending 5-6 months a year exploring the main rivers to confirm my idea that such drawings may be located in this part of the country. There was a brief outcry in the 'N.Z. Listener' about the destruction of drawings and the necessity of making a complete survey of the country but, with the New Zealand aptitude for ignoring things the matter ended. Having closed my books on cave drawings for some five years and transferred all my records and photographs to the U.S.A., I have no ready reference to answer specific questions with absolute accuracy."

"When I did my recordings on those inadequate funds ... the drawings had deteriorated so much in some places that recording had to be done by wetting parts of the rock to bring them up clearly temporarily. This, however, was too brief to enable me to take photographic records. It was then that I resorted to retouching some drawings. Having seen the poor efforts by others in Weka Pass and other places (where Indian ink was used) I resolved to restore only dot by dot what could be seen by the treatment by water, but I never attempted any interpretation. All retouching was done strictly to retrace only what remained, and many of these took up to seven days work before a photographic record could be taken. I have been aware that retouching was in principle most undesirable, but many drawings would have been poorly recorded or not at all if I had not taken this decision at that time. I had no illusions about their survival, since nothing had been done about it since Dr. Ellmore had drawn attention to this issue. In the North Island I resorted to another method whereby I used charcoal which could be brushed off after the records were made I am perfectly willing to stand accused for vandalism, by retouching some drawings but I can't bear being accused by people who prefer to shut their eyes to wholesale destruction of the shelters they still have. My predicament was the same as Dr. Ellmore; cutting out cave drawings for removal to museums is not the best solution, but it was the only one in his day. The ones he left in these shelters did not survive."

Finally, Theo Schoon summarises:-

1. Some eight shelters were destroyed during the time I was working in the field.
2. The material still in the field justifies a complete survey of all the main rivers in New Zealand.
3. It requires a team of competent people with adequate equipment, and authority to excavate. I did not have the specialised and useful films for recording by special means, on the kind of pay I received.
4. No effective protection is possible when the full amount is not known to the officials concerned with protection and preservation.
5. Finally, I am being blamed for bad retouching work which was done long before I ever saw a cave drawing.