



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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/>.

BOOK REVIEWS

Jones, Kevin, L. *Nga Tohuwhenua Mai Te Rangi. A New Zealand Archaeology in Aerial Photographs.* Victoria University Press, Wellington 1994. 296pp., 195 B&W photographs, 24 colour photographs. Price \$39.95

This book is unlike previous published studies of archaeological research in New Zealand in that it provides a sweeping panorama of human occupation from the earliest visible field monuments to those of the near present.

Coven Jones has succeeded in selecting and organising the aerial photographs to illustrate a comprehensive historical and explanatory text. This is no mean feat when he had so many aerial views of sites: the publication could have been just another pictorial 'travelogue'. He has managed to convey the importance of the landscape setting of so many of the sites, so that their relevance to any particular area is apparent. This was of course a simple task in the later 19th and 20th century industrial sites, but the earlier Maori sites provided more of a challenge which he has solved convincingly.

After an introductory section in which the history of aerial photography is reviewed and techniques and interpretations discussed, the text proper starts with sites of Maori origin. These include illustrations of settlement patterns, pa, horticulture, other economic activities as well as 19th century fortifications. This is followed by chapters on regional coverage from Northland to South Island. The book concludes with a section on the industrial sites of coal mining, whaling, mission settlements and gold-mining. The publication, then, provides a general overview of archaeological sites as opposed to previous publications which have concentrated on local surveys.

That having been said, it is not an easy read due in part to the organisation of the relationship between the text and photographs. The first apparent difficulty lies with the contribution of the typographer. There is no clear separation between the type faces of the narrative text and the annotation of the photographs. Whilst the latter is certainly in a lower case, it is not always easy to go with the flow of the narrative, especially when turning the page. Another difficulty is in relating the text to the unnumbered plates when the only reference is 'illustrated in chapter ...'. This is a minor criticism, however, because the essence of archaeology is searching and finding, not only in the field. A major defect which will frustrate serious students is the complete lack of the Archaeological Association site record numbers. After all, J. D.H. Buchanan in 1957 inspired the Association to initiate the recording scheme in order to preserve at least some record of the fast disappearing field monuments. It is a pity that this major work fails to provide a link between the Scheme and the printed word. Site names may or may not be known, they may or may not be accurate, but site numbers (within the limits of grid references) are.

BOOK REVIEWS

Part 2, the Regional Coverage, is well organised. An introductory general statement is followed by a resume of the geology which provides the basis of the various economic activities both historic and prehistoric. The author has also managed the difficult task of relating to various sites such Maori traditions as are available. Each region is introduced with a map of the sites discussed clearly highlighted. The only regret is that although the small single platform (so-called 'ring ditch') pa are mentioned, he illustrates so few. Although such pa are the numerically predominant sites (in Taranaki if not elsewhere) the Plates are mostly of the larger pa complexes. This is misleading and distorts the overall aim of the book.

Part 3, the Nineteenth Century Industrial Sites are briefly but spectacularly covered. The photographs add a new dimension to these sites, views of which in previous publications have been limited to ground close-ups.

A concluding essay postscript explores the difficult subject of relating the landscape to the present social and political agenda.

Each chapter has extensive references and the bibliography reveals the depth of the research put into the publication. 'Landmarks from the Sky' is essential reading for anyone interested in New Zealand's past and future.

Alastair Buist

Erosion on Archaeological Earthworks: Its Prevention, Control and Repair. Edited by André Q. Berry and Ian W. Brown. Clwyd County Council. Available from Clwyd Archaeological Service, Clywyd County Council, Department of Development and Tourism, Shire Hall, Mold, Clwyd CH7 6NB, U.K. 160 pp. ISBN 0 900121 57 2. Price, 30 Pounds, including post and packing.

This good book is the product of a meeting called by the Association of County Archaeological Officers and the Institute of Field Archaeologists Resource Management Special Interest Group. As such, it represents an interesting stocktaking of the state of archaeological site stabilisation in the United Kingdom (and as a by-blow, the United States).

Contents include the following: Archaeological Site Management and Erosion Control: The Environmental Context - Ian W. Brown; Managing Ancient Earthworks: Diagnosis, Cure and Prevention of Erosion - Anthony D.F. Streeten; Archaeological Site Stabilisation: The American Experience - Robert M. Thorne; Flat Earth Erosion Control: Caring for Archaeological Monuments in

BOOK REVIEWS

Cambridgeshire - Alison Taylor; and finally, Product Listing [of geotechnical products] - Sue Haygarth.

The balance is of regional or site-specific studies. Specific sites discussed include Stonehenge (grass maintenance in the immediate surrounds); Hobs Moat, Solihull; Moel Fenlli hillfort, Clwyd; Devil's Dyke, Cambridgeshire; Cawthorn Roman Camps, North York Moors National Park; and Castlehaw, Yorkshire Dales National Park.

Much of the book's content is without theoretical or considered ethical underpinning, although there is some useful terminology for detailed description of erosion features throughout - 'desire lines', for example, perfectly describes the persistence of preferred tracks by visitors. This particularistic tone may be the reason why, as co-editor Berry observes, few mainstream journals will accept papers on site stabilisation. However, the immediate and, alas, depressing, parallel with New Zealand experience of site deterioration is evident in the numerous colour photographs, and the book works well in this respect.

The concepts of the ICOMOS Charter are sadly lacking and would no doubt assist - for example, are they engaged in restoration, stabilisation or reconstruction? These are precise terms in the ICOMOS literature which have the merit of being close to their general meaning. In his full paper (many are too brief), Anthony Streeten, an Inspector of Ancient Monuments with English Heritage, refers to 'repairs and reinstatement', drawing on well-recognised building restoration principles, such as 'truth to materials'. There is little regard for creeping deterioration caused by well meant but inappropriate intervention.

The most alarming example of 'reinstatement' is Stonea Camp, a lowland hillfort owned by the Cambridgeshire County Council. With a triple defensive perimeter, which I estimate to have been about 2.5 km long and enclosing 3-6 ha, this scheduled site was unlawfully ploughed out (by a tenant in the 1960s!) but has been 'reinstated' using a hydraulic digger following crop and soil marks. Here there seems to have been an assumption that restoration of earthworks is desirable. I am not so sure.

The chapter about habitat 're-creation' (i.e., for species) is surely a misnomer; the international literature is full of the debate about the ethics of habitat restoration. There doesn't seem to be an inkling here that the prehistoric or ancient habitat could be more readily and appropriately restored, and might be more helpful to species habitat creation or 'invention'. Generally, as here in New Zealand, archaeologists seem a bit too keen to accommodate the green lobby - perhaps out of an intuitive sense of their political clout - instead of challenging their assumptions.

Generally, except for the paper by Streeten, there is too little recognition

BOOK REVIEWS

that some of the problems arise from landscape processes such as gradual revegetation or erosion, and that the solution lies in accommodating or taking advantage of landscape design, rather than jibbing against ecological process on a piecemeal basis. Of course, almost all New Zealand earthworks are a tenth of the age of the United Kingdom examples, and we have to have particular regard to the 'if' and 'when' of intervention - otherwise exorbitant maintenance costs will be incurred. The massive rounded contours of the Bronze or Iron Age earthworks, the product of 3,000 years of landscape process compared with New Zealand's (on average) 300 years, give particular cause for alarm if the process of erosion can be seen to accelerate.

In eastern Scotland, Gordon J. Barclay notes a preference for strategic removal of causative factors (e.g., fencing out stock or rabbits), allowing for scars to re-vegetate, rather than tactical responses such as 'expensive, interventionist earthwork repair' (p.27).

Finally, the lengthy chapter on erosion protection mats or webs and the like shows a great range of products, but the illustrated examples are only occasionally in archaeological or heritage management use. The products themselves are probably not so important as the possible implementation techniques of creating drainage, stabilising surfaces and providing other interfaces with a limited range of cheap, readily available products - principally synthetic cloths and biodegradable natural fibre mats or composites.

These objections aside, I was pleased to see this book (copies have been ordered for Department of Conservation regional libraries) and anyone giving advice on stock management or human tracking will find value in it.

Kevin Jones