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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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EVIDENCE OF ARCHAIC OCCUPATION ALONG AUCKLAND WEST COAST

by R.G.W. Jolly.

Almost all University of Auckland Archaeological Society activity to date has been along, or near the east coast, apart from surface investigation of Kaipara sites.

As I feel that 'Moa Hunter' sites are perhaps the most vulnerable, as far as destruction by farming, erosion, and fossicking are concerned, my own activities, apart from club activities, are particularly concerned with such sites. After reading the Wellington report*, I would like to mention that the large Moa fragments at Roger Green's Tairua site were uncovered during Easter 1959, and during November 1958.

Business has taken me, on many occasions during the past ten years, to the vicinity of the west coast from Waikato Heads to Manukau Heads. This is a very large area which contains many pa and other evidence of considerable settlement by Polynesian-Maori over possibly the full period of settlement of any kind. Some years ago I was shown a fine set of black stone tanged triangular adzes, and more recently, examples of almost any Wairau type adze; also a harpoon point.

In the company of some Waiuku and Peninsular friends, some site investigation has been carried out, and an investigation by square is in course of being carried out. To my great delight, a very large piece of Moa bone was found embedded in an odd concretion in a dune face associated with a very small type 4A and other adzes of similar age.

Ron Scarlett has carefully measured the bone, which he pronounced "certainly Moa, and disgustingly large". As it would seem that there are other sites in the Raglan and Kawhia areas, it seems to me that the early explorers made a very thorough job of investigating the complete coastline, and that the task of tracing their activities is for that reason all the more interesting and important.

In respect to the Moa bone site, I would like to acknowledge the very great kindness of the farm family on whose land it is; also Mr. Ham. Parker's generous devotion of a weekend to a preliminary scientific survey of the area, and Jack Golson's very great kindness in that a party of three, including himself, visited this site, and also handled and viewed the adzes.

* Vol.2, No.4, p.25.