



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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EXCAVATIONS AT SMUGGLERS CAVE

Ken Wright and Brian Bennett

In January this year, while exploring the coastline East of Diamond Harbour, we discovered a small cave shelter on the eastern tip of Stoddart Point and directly opposite Ripapa Island, former Ngati Mamoe stronghold. This cave is located approximately 16 ft. above sea level in a cliff face of red volcanic scoria. Part of the entrance is blocked by a roof fall which makes entry possible from one side only. The cave is roughly 18 ft. wide by 5 ft. high at the mouth, sloping back 18 ft. to 2 ft. high at the back. At the mouth rain has washed soil down from the hill above to form a layer covering the midden to a depth of 18 inches and back a distance of 7 ft. At the back of the cave the first layer of mussel is exposed. We have had to work the cave in an appalling stench left by the Guano of several pairs of Blue Penguin

EXCAVATION TECHNIQUE:

Owing to the smallness of the cave shelter we decided on a grid consisting of twelve 4 ft. squares laid out in a north-south direction. Excavation commenced middle February and the first square excavated yielded five layers. The top four containing mostly rocky shore shellfish and fishbone. The last layer contained the same as above but in addition two fragments of Moabone. We have managed so far only to excavate three alternate squares so we are not able to produce stratigraphic data to accompany this article. At the present time we are doing the sorting of the midden samples from each square and as this is a slow painstaking business it will be sometime before we can produce a full report on this work. The species of midden material are as follows:-

Shellfish (rocky shore):

- (a) Common Mussel (*Mytilus canaliculus*)
- (b) Paua (*Haliotis iris*)
- (c) Silvery Paua (*Haliotis Australis*)
- (d) Radiate Limpet (*Cellana radians*)
- (e) Cooks Turban Shell (*Cookia Sulcata*)
- (f) Cats Eye (*Lunella smaragda*)

Bone:

- (a) Fish bone (not identifiable)
- (b) Bird bone (yet to be identified)
- (c) Moa bone (species yet to be identified)

Completion of the cave shelter will probably take to the end of the year and by then we hope to publish a complete article. Since both of us are still at High School and have found it hard financially to run the dig every weekend owing to the forms of transport involved these include bus, train and launch, so trips have got rather spasmodic.

We would also like to thank the Members of the C.M.A.S. who helped us at the beginning of the year.