



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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The majority of the flakes are rather shapeless - without doubt the best flakes would have been carted to coastal occupational sites, or wherever they were needed, and it is perhaps surprising that so many well-formed flakes are left at the site.

A narrow fissure in the outcrop penetrates about fifteen feet in, and although it is just wide enough for a man to get into, an examination (including test excavation in the dust and debris on the floor) revealed only natural flakes, and no sign that it had ever been used.

The Nenthorn Quarry lies near the heads of two valleys which lead to the Waikouaiti and Taieri rivers respectively, and these may possibly comprise access routes from the coast. 'Maori Ovens' may be seen on the nearby hills, and artifacts (adzes, etc) have been found in the area.

There has not yet been any definite identification of Nenthorn 'Quartzite' from occupational sites, although specimens from two coastal sites (at Te Hākapurere, North Otago, and Waikouaiti) appear to be of identical material. The positive identification of 'Quartzite' sources and the examination of other quarries are two important tasks for the future.

References

1. More correctly, 'orthoquartzite'. Cf. LOCKERBIE, L. 1959 'From Moa-Hunter to Classic Maori in Southern New Zealand,' in FREEMAN, J.D. and GEDDES W.R. (eds) *Anthropology in the South Seas*, 83.
2. The area has not yet been covered by the provisional one mile series.

Excavations at Tai Rua, Otago, 1961

P. GATHERCOLE

Brief interim reports on excavations at this coastal Archaic site (NZMS 1, S136, Oamaru, 467512), which have been in progress since January 1958, have appeared in previous issues of the Newsletter.¹ Work was resumed for 3 days only over Easter by some members of the North Otago Scientific and Historical Society and the Otago Anthropological Society. Attention was concentrated on the south-eastern margin, in the area between the Waiānākara - Kakanui road and the beach, the aim being to look for evidence of post-holes which might be compared with the two possible ones previously discovered on the other side of the road. 12 more of these were found but as they presented no consistent pattern within the limited area excavated, it would be unwise to regard them as necessarily reliable indications of structural evidence.

There is only one main cultural layer in this part of the site, which lies on a clean yellow sand. All of the possible post-holes showed as either cylindrical or inverted cone-shaped dark stains in this sand, with (and this was a new feature) the cultural layer lying directly on top of them. The maximum diameters and depths varied, being between $4\frac{1}{2}$ - 8 ins and $7\frac{1}{2}$ - 12 ins respectively.

Another feature of considerable interest lying beneath the cultural layer was exposed in one square. It consisted, firstly, of 3 layers of dirty, loose sand lying conformably together and apparently comprising the fill of an oval hole, which at this point cut through the clean yellow sand into the underlying clay. When these layers

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were cleared, it was discovered that the bottom of the hole took the form of a smooth oval depression in the clay, measuring about 19 ins x 17 ins along its axes and 6 ins deep. On one side of this depression, 9 pieces of wood protruded from the clay and formed an irregular arc on the inside of its edge. Some showed what appeared to be adze marks.

It was unfortunate that this interesting discovery was made on the last day of the excavation, when there was little time for its examination. It is tentatively suggested that it is the seating or 'ghost-hole' for a large post which was subsequently removed, but detailed examination must await re-excavation, and a more extensive study of the area surrounding it, to be carried out in January 1962.

References

1. TROTTER, M. 1959 'Archaeological Investigations in North Otago,' *N.Z. Archaeological Association Newsletter*, 2, No.3, 10-13.
OTAGO ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY - Fieldwork Group. 1960 'Fieldwork in Otago, 1959-1960,' *N.Z. Archaeological Association Newsletter*, 3, No.3, 14-15.

A Note on Problems of Identification of Fish Remains

K. DUNCAN

At most sites a large amount of bone material is found, which has to accurately recorded and identified if one is to reconstruct the everyday life of the former inhabitants. The study of bones will show which animals were being caught and how the food was processed by them. In addition it may show if there was any change in the intensity of exploitation of the animal populations and to what extent the composition of these populations was affected by human intervention (this may have led to dietary changes of cultural significance.)

Much therefore depends on primary identification in the field, which will enable sufficient typical and well localised material to be retained from the total excavated, and some of this can be sent to the specialist later. The latter may be sent so much material, however, that a serious bottleneck will arise from the necessarily slow process of detailed identification. This means that much depends on the ability of the excavator to carry out provisional identification and sorting of the material found, and ensure that this is representative of the excavation as a whole. But what are to be our criteria for selection, bearing in mind our present state of knowledge?

Many of these points were discussed at the Association's Wellington Conference last year. Without reiterating the points made there, I would like to suggest, as one who is sent fish bones for identification, that present excavators adopt the following procedure for fish remains:-

1. Retain everything excavated, cleaning it sufficiently (usually brushing is adequate) to enable a primary sorting to be made.
2. Separate out the head bones (the most diagnostic bones of the fish); bag them with the usual context data in numerical series, but link the bag numbers if the bones are