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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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EXCAVATIONS ON MOUNT ROSKILL

By Wilfred Shawcross

An archaeological salvage excavation was carried out on the crater area of Mt. Roskill, which was, until recently, one of the few relatively undamaged volcanic cones of the Auckland Isthmus. The site is extensively terraced on its outer slopes, but the purpose of the excavations was to salvage as much evidence as possible from the area of the crater, which is to have a large reservoir sunk into it.

The work was financed entirely by generous gifts from the Mayor and Borough Council of Mt. Roskill and these enabled a team of five trained excavators to work full-time at the site from the beginning of November to December 12th. They also provided equipment, including the use for a few days of earth-moving machinery, an operator and a very useful hut.

Excavations were made in two main areas (see plans), Area I being within the northern lip of the crater and Area II on the southern side of the crater, where there was no lip. In addition, test pits were put down within the level area of the crater, but these only produced evidence for extensive occupation in the form of numerous hangi. The areas were originally selected because of surface evidence for pits; however, it quickly became apparent that there was far greater complexity than was suggested by the pairs of surface pits in each area.

Area I was the first to be excavated, starting with the surface Pits A and C. The extension of excavations then disclosed Pits B, J, D, and E which are closer to the centre of the crater. Unfortunately, by this time the contractors had started their work, so that the original extent of the group of pits could not be explored fully. The surviving area was found to contain Pits F, G and H and the remains of I and K and some evidence of L.

Work was then transferred to Area II starting with surface Pits M and N. A trench extended in towards the centre of the crater disclosed parts of P which was the largest pit found on the site, but which could not be excavated completely. Work on the edge of the cone disclosed numerous hangi, close to M and also a line of postholes, presumably evidence for a stockade, parallel to N. Outside the stockade was a small pit, Q and then, down the slope, were found more postholes and signs of other wood-work which would seem to be

Mt. ROSKILL



