



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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wooden implements. Other materials sometimes used were the aerial roots of the kiekie (Freycinetia Banksii), and the thin roots of several species of climbing rata.

Of special interest is a repaired canoe paddle (hoe) which has a well-shaped, thin blade, and wavy handle. The blade itself is 2 ft.  $8\frac{3}{4}$  ins. in length, but unfortunately the tip has been broken away. The widest part of the blade is  $4\frac{3}{8}$  ins. Extending 21 ins. is a longitudinal split or crack, which runs the greater part of the length of the blade. Twelve inches from the broken tip two holes, one on either side of the crack, have been made so that the split could be drawn together and closed. Unfortunately the lashing is missing. Although I have stated that there are two holes, in actual fact, to complete the two perforations, five holes were commenced with a stone pointed drill. Each hole is crater shaped and was drilled part of the way from each side. In one instance, two holes were started on the same side, one of which joins its partner on the opposite side. The thickness of the blade where the repair was carried out is about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch. To date, I have not seen another example of a repaired paddle blade but obviously it would be easier to effect repairs than make a new paddle.

A repaired wooden shovel 4 ft. 10 ins. in length, with a well shaped, shallow blade 20 ins. in length and  $6\frac{1}{4}$  ins. in width at the broadest part comes from the Kaipara district. On one side part of the rim is missing but there is still evidence of a perforation in the blade close to the part where blade and rim merge. Presumably, there was also a hole or even two holes in the missing rim or edge. Almost opposite on the other side there are two holes in the rim  $1\frac{1}{2}$  ins. apart and a third in the flattened portion of the blade. Perhaps, strictly speaking, this latter is not a repair but is rather anticipating the necessity of repairing the rim, which was very likely to split off when in use. The mangemange lashing is still intact, the unsplit stem being used in this case.

#### NEWS FROM OTHER AREAS

##### FIELD ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE GISBORNE DISTRICT by Allan Pullar

There is no branch of the N.Z. Archaeological Association in Gisborne. In 1956, the Gisborne Philosophical Society came into being with a principal object of doing a small amount of original work in natural history. Mr Leo Fowler, the first president, had already conducted some research into oral traditions of the local

Maori and during his term of office, carried out a "dig" on a remnant of a Maori occupation site near the mouth of Maraetaha River, sixteen miles south of Gisborne. No worth-while artefacts were discovered, but for the sake of record it is hoped that Mr Fowler will report on his observations at this place.

In the course of a detailed soil survey of the Gisborne Plains, W.A. Pullar found several gravel patches on the high banks bordering Waipaoa River, as well as an umu in an old soil buried under five feet of recent alluvium at Tietjen's bend. The gravel patches suggest Maori gardens. No middens were dug up. Later on, numerous small pits were traced on the hills bordering the Plains and these suggested Maori dwelling sites. From these pieces of evidence it would seem that the pre-European peoples dwelt on the hills and used the Plains for their gardens.

Field archaeology received a fillip with the arrival of Dr H.W. Wellman, who spent about a year in Gisborne. As he was puzzled by the lack of distinct Maori occupational sites and by the absence of artefacts on Gisborne Plains, he decided to reconnoitre the coast from Nuhaka to Tolaga Bay on the principle that the Maoris must have lived near the shore-line to be close to their source of sea food. Here he found abundant evidence of occupation, including rubbish dumps, pieces of obsidian and fragments of seal bone. Places examined include Nuhaka, Mahia, mouth of Maraetaha River, Oronge Bay, Kaiti Hill, Tuamouto Island, Tatapouri, Pouawa, Whangara, Cooks Cove, Loisell's Beach and Kaiarau Bay, just north of Tolaga Bay.

Dr Wellman, as a geologist, was not satisfied in merely picking up bits of hard material associated with Maori occupation but was mainly interested in stratigraphy, particularly the relationship between occupational layers and geological beds of known age. He wanted a connecting thread through all of the deposits along the coast. He was just about to give up when Mr W.H. Way spotted a thin bed of "black" pumice at Cooks Cove. This bed is found to occur in all shoreline deposits from Waimarama (just south of Napier) in the south to Mercury Bay, Coromandel peninsula, in the north. The relationship of this bed to occupational layers at the mouth of the Maraetaha River has been mentioned by W.A. Pullar in a "Note on Volcanic Ash Beds and Field Archaeology", March (1959) issue of the Journal of the Polynesian Society.

Enthusiasm in Field Archaeology was further stimulated by the arrival of an American archaeologist, Mr Roger Green, to inspect the sections at Oronge Bay and at the mouth of Maraetaha River. The presence of the Taupo lapilli member immediately underneath occupational layers encouraged him to undertake a "professional dig" at

Orongo Bay early in 1959. Although no artefacts were discovered, he obtained sufficient evidence from the sections to warrant publishing a paper. A description and interpretation of a fossil soil, as well as a note concerning the Taupo lapilli and its age, will be contributed by W.A. Pullar in the same paper.

The presence of Taupo lapilli (erupted ca 150 A.D.) so close to occupational layers led Dr Wellman to the view that pre-European peoples arrived here much earlier than had been thought. He put a probable date of arrival of these peoples at ca 500 A.D. His findings were reported to the Gisborne Philosophical Society during 1958 and it is expected that he will be making a report on the distribution of the "black" pumice shortly.

As volcanic ash beds can offer important stratigraphic datums to field archaeologists, the Holocene Ash Stratigraphy in the Rotorua-Gisborne districts is being currently worked on by C.G. Vucetich, pedologist, Rotorua, and W.A. Pullar. There is sufficient work done to show that Tarawera, Kaharoa and Taupo ash beds are the most likely to be of value to field archaeologists.

The recording of sites along the lines suggested by the N.Z. Archaeological Association is proceeding slowly; about fifty sites have been plotted on the map and details are being written up. The present Keeper of the Files is W.A. Pullar, but as he is being transferred to Whakatane shortly, the office is being handed over to Mr A.T. Simpson, whose address is 163 Clifford Street, Gisborne. There is a large amount of work to be done in this field and voluminous evidence being offered by farmers, school-teachers and others. Unfortunately, the private time of the Keeper of the Files is so occupied with Holocene Ash stratigraphy that little is available for site recording; another active man is required to assist the new Keeper of the Files in this valuable work.

It is pleasing to see that field archaeology is now assuming its rightful place in archaeology and that traditionalists and artefact collectors do not now have all of the subject to themselves.

The Gisborne Museum was opened in 1954 and a new Maori wing added in 1958. The Museum has a good collection of greenstone artefacts and a fair number of adzes, and material associated with the period of early settlement is well set up. The natural history side is not yet developed. Mr W.H. Way, who is also Secretary-Treasurer of the Gisborne Philosophical Society, is Director of the Museum.

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