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FIELDWORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

I am grateful to the various contributors for continuing to keep me informed of activities in their areas. If anyone else has information of interest to *A/NZ* readers I would be glad to hear from them.

Auckland

With the formal separation of the Historic Places Trust from the Department of Conservation under the Historic Places Act 1993, discussions are taking place between the Trust and DOC to clarify their respective roles. It is expected, however, that we will continue to provide archaeological services to the Trust in the form of advice to landowners and Councils, archaeological assessments of land proposed for development, and survey, excavation and recording if required as a condition of Authorities to Modify sites. The main issue to be resolved is the proportion of our time that should be spent doing work of this kind as opposed to work on the Conservation estate.

After months of hanging fire David Veart has something to report on the North Head tunnel investigation at last. An old gun pit site on the summit which had been converted into a water tank in the 1960s was recently investigated. A number of people had claimed to have entered a tunnel system from this point. The Government Communication Security Bureau had previously used radar to scan the water tank and had suggested a tunnel may have existed here. Army engineers had drilled into some loose fill behind the water tank walls, but nothing conclusive was established.

After consultation with engineers and army explosives experts a team of concrete cutters started to cut out the 1960s concrete tank liner from inside the old gun pit. This peeled off the walls with remarkable ease to reveal a battered but intact 1880s gun pit wall complete with the drum readings - the old painted signs used to help aim the gun. A band around the top of the gun pit showed degrees and signs indicated landmarks such as Bean Rock Lighthouse and the 19th century minefield. A 500 mm deep core showed that the loose material derived from very poor concrete used to build the gun pit walls in 1885. There was absolutely no sign of any entrances.

There are at least another six sites on the reserve to be investigated. Full restoration is planned at each stage. One important outcome will be the recovery and restoration of two 19th century gun pits, neither of which have been visible to the public for the last 30 years.

Robert Brassey and Brenda Sewell resurveyed parts of the Kawau Island Historic Reserve and Stony Hill Recreation Reserve on Kawau Island this month. Around 45 new sites were located. These were mainly associated with Maori occupation, but some new areas of mine workings and other European sites

were also found. Some further fieldwork is planned to complete the survey.

Sarah Macready, DOC

Northland

Pinus radiata is the current catch phrase in the north and from phone calls over the last few weeks it appears that every other landowner wants to plant, thin or clearfell pines on their properties. We are attempting to deflect their enthusiasm away from archaeological sites, but nightmares of pine seedlings creeping up pa are beginning to haunt us.

The historical importance of Russell has received additional emphasis recently. Wayne England and Simon Best have been involved in test excavations and monitoring associated with the Russell Sewerage Scheme. Numerous 19th century artefacts have been recovered, the greatest concentration from a deep rubbish pit near the waterfront which contained large quantities of domestic earthenware, a variety of bottles and two superb chamber pots, one with a blue and the other a green transfer-printed design. The work will continue for a few more weeks and is already providing valuable information on European settlement of the area.

The old Marist printery, popularly known as Pompellier House, is also situated on the Russell waterfront. Renovations to the building have been in progress for several years with the aim of recapturing its original form and structure. These are almost completed. From a museum piece lacking authenticity, the building has been transformed into an early 19th century printery and tannery. This will incorporate a working printing press and actual tanning of hides in reconstructed pits located in their original positions.

Some attention has also been focused on Okiato (old Russell) the first seat of government in New Zealand. An initial test excavation last year indicated that although the site had been ploughed it still contained sub-surface evidence. Further testing this year has revealed many fragmented artefacts and brick structures which may represent paths. An excavation of the well and machine scraping of the Government House site are proposed before any landscaping of the reserve takes place.

Several pa administered by DOC are suffering from heavy visitor traffic and other forms of erosion. However there have been some positive achievements this winter. Steps and a viewing platform have been constructed on the small pa on Motuarohia, one of the most frequently islands in the Bay. The work was undertaken as an army exercise and hopefully it will help to control erosion of the steep access track. proposals for vegetation management of Ruapekapeka Pa were mentioned in the last issue. Peter Woods of AgResearch has now

applied for funding to establish experimental plots of native grasses on areas adjacent to the site and also in the dunelands of the Far North where significant midden and stone workfloors are eroding at an alarming rate.

Other recent work in Northland has included a survey of Maori land near Whangaroa at the request of the local hapu, Plane-table mapping of Pohui Pa at Kaero, and archaeological monitoring of developments at Houhora Harbour and Marsden Point with the assistance of Vic Hensley and Stan Bartlett. We appreciate their help and also that of Cathy Barr and Noel Henry who have made an excellent job of up-dating site record maps.

Joan Maingay, DOC

Bay of Plenty

Apart from the usual flow of public inquiries regarding the location of archaeological sites, archaeological activity has been relatively quiet during the mid-winter months, providing an opportunity to prepare for a number of projects anticipated during the next few months and enabling the completion of plans and reports from last summer's work.

Four draft conservation plans have been written for historic reserves administered by the Department of Conservation in the Bay of Plenty. It is hoped that by developing a "user friendly" and flexible management plan for historic resources the model will be adopted by local authorities and other land managers to assist with the conservation of a range of historic places.

During July Department of Conservation staff at Tauranga, in conjunction with Lynda Bowers, have been monitoring the demolition of the Masonic Hotel in the central business district of Tauranga. The building was constructed in 1866, and the archaeological monitoring of ground disturbance was required by the Historic Places Trust as part of the controlled demolition of the building. Most of the interior fittings of the building were donated to the Tauranga Historic Village. The demolition did not cause disturbance to archaeological features, however there have been a couple of incidents with bottle hunters attempting to dig the site. The Historic Places Trust intends to require an archaeological investigation of the site when a new building is constructed on the property.

Two recent reports are available from the Department of Conservation, PO Box 1146, Rotorua. These are:

Grouden, V. 1993. Matata and Ohope scenic reserves historic resources inventory. 61 pp, \$10.00.

Grouden, V. 1993. Kaimai Mamaku Forest Park historic resources inventory. 95pp, \$15.00

Lynda Bowers, DOC

Taranaki

The only archaeological activity in Taranaki since the last note has been decidedly negative, alas, pa site despoliation and destruction. At least four known sites have suffered. Unfortunately the 1993 Historic Places Bill does not, from my reading, offer any further protection than the old one.

Two years ago the remaining two of the important three Ketemarae pa at the southern termination of the ancient inland bush track from north Taranaki were effectively despoiled by farming activities (the third was destroyed many years ago). One, on a small headland, has been a source of soil quarried for farm fill: in fact this pa is called by the local farmer "the quarry". The second pa has been virtually obliterated in order to provide smoother passage to top-dressing vehicles.

Early this year one of the two historic sites of the 1860 Taranaki War was despoiled. Onukukaitara, along with Puketekauere, were purpose built for the early campaign as described so vividly by James Belich in "The New Zealand Wars". Despite the defeat of the Imperial Force in the engagement, the pa were abandoned by the Maori and quickly partially levelled by the Imperial Force who built a blockhouse on a small section of Onukukaitara. However, enough remained of the field-works to be still visible. Puketekauere was acquired by Lands and Surveys as a reserve, but the close-by Onukukaitara remained in private hands. First a chunk of the platform was quarried years ago. This year a new owner has placed a large water tank on it, which is bad enough, but also grazes cattle on the area causing inevitable erosion in the light Taranaki soil.

The third pa, discovered during a recent survey situated on a laharal hill near the coast at Cape Egmont, has a house being built upon its tihi. The fourth, and perhaps the saddest, is the complete destruction of a small headland pa on the boundary of Hawera township. Of the two pa on the outskirts of Hawera, one was destroyed early in the century, but its transverse upland ditch still defines the area. The other was a small quarter acre low headland into a swampy creek. An inland transverse ditch and bank and a terminal bank enclosed a platform in which were well preserved rectangular surface pits and collapsed rua. These have all been destroyed in the last month by the new owner.

In 1957 the NZ Archaeological Association initiated the Site Recording

Scheme in order to record sites before they were destroyed. Well at least these four sites were recorded, but.....

It now seems to remain, by the new bill, to the Maori Heritage Council of the Trust to uphold the preservation of their wahi tapu. Do they know what they are up against?

Alastair Buist

Nelson and Marlborough

A series of positive meetings have been held with local authorities in the Nelson/Marlborough region to improve awareness and protection of archaeological sites and other historic places in district and regional plans. The most recent of these was in Kaikoura where NZHPT, Canterbury Museum and DOC representatives met with members of the Kaikoura District council to improve the awareness of historic and archaeological values present in the South Bay area and to determine measures for investigation and protection prior to proposed development of the area. (People the Kaikoura Conference will be aware of this issue).

Steve Bagley has carried out an archaeological survey in Tory Channel (principally Maori and whaling sites) and a more general survey of historic places in the Clarence Reserve, a long established pastoral run with an excellent assemblage of old cob, slab and iron farm buildings and huts.

A rabbit population explosion on Wairau Bar which threatened to cause damage to the archaeological sites has been dealt with following a successful poisoning programme by the Marlborough District Council.

Field Centre Staff in Golden Bay have successfully replaced the timber foundations to the most vulnerable half of the Johnston's United gold battery on the Aorere Goldfield.

Steve Bagley, DOC