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FIELDWORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

NORTHLAND

Northland's inclement weather since Christmas has been a boon to farmers but it added problems to completion of the final stage of an excavation at the Okaito well site. (See cover photograph this issue). Volunteers expected our usual hot dry summer, so they arrived without raincoats and were obliged to adapt wet weather gear from plastic bags. But although the fashion scene was unorthodox, results were satisfying. The well proved to be over 12 metres deep; it contained numerous structural timbers including joists, shingles and weather boards up to 4.4 metres long which showed evidence of charring and were almost certainly from the first government house. A number of 19th century bottles were recovered from near the base of the well, also a flax kit and stock of a musket complete with trigger and trigger guard.

Another recent excavation in the Bay of Islands has been conducted by Simon Best at the rear of the Stone Store, Kerikeri. He uncovered remnants of the Christian Missionary Society drain and recorded extensive damage to the stonework of the building caused by more recent attempts at drainage.

Inland from the Bay on land below the historically significant Pakinga Pa, a farmer discovered a cache of wooden artefacts about 18 months ago while digging a pond for his cattle. He stopped work, contacted DOC archaeologists and the artefacts are now being conserved at the University of Auckland. He has shown remarkable restraint in not completing the pond before DOC staff had required the necessary authorisation to excavate a small remaining area of wetland. Consequently, with the blessing of kaumatua, this project will go ahead at the end of February and we will report on the results in the next issue.

Work is also underway to increase the visitor appeal of two historic buildings administered by Northland Conservancy. Adrienne Slocombe is making a collection of early photographs and newspaper cuttings relating to the Mongonui Courthouse and its surroundings for display within the building, and Sarah Hillary of the Auckland City Art Gallery recently assessed the condition of a mural at the WW 2 gun emplacement at Bream Head. The painting is not a great work of art but it is of particular historic interest because it depicts Whangarei Harbour as it was in the 1940s long before the erection of the Marsden point refinery which now dominates the landscape.

Joan Maingay, DOC

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BAY OF PLENTY

Bruce McFadgen, from the Science and Research Division of DOC, in concluding his research on coastal geomorphology and archaeological distribution, spent two weeks on Matakana Island in February with a member of staff and a graduate student from the Geography Department of Massey University. This work involved extensive mapping of sites and geomorphological features, and the reinvestigation of some midden deposits.

With the completion of an archaeological survey of the Ohiwa Harbour margins by DOC in November, Ken Phillips, a Masters student from Auckland University who was involved in this survey, will undertake a thesis on the settlement archaeology of the harbour. Concentrating on the Hiwarau Block at Ohiwa Ken will incorporate this information into a regional model using GIS.

In March Rick McGovern-Wilson will excavate an occupation site on the Ohiwa Harbour which was identified during the November survey. On-going marine erosion in the Ohiwa Harbour is threatening this site. Eroded lithic material recovered along and below high tide indicates it was occupied from an early date. Two other occupation sites on the Ohope Spit will also be investigated which are threatened by subdivision and erosion. These investigations form part of a midden project Rick is continuing in the Bay of Plenty.

A survey of Te Panui pa, Tuhua (Mayor Island) was completed in January to confirm the location of the most recent marae as determined by historical data and photography, and archaeological evidence. It is the intension of the Tuhua Trust Board to build a wharenuī on the pa immediately adjacent to the previous marae.

In March the greater part of restoration work on the Piako Tramway in the Waiorongomai Valley will be carried out following the Piako Tramway Conservation Plan Part 2, completed early this year by Michael Kelly. Jack Fry and an assistant from Conservation Supplies, Wellington, will spend a week on-site providing specialist advice and completing conservation treatments.

A Tourism Facilities Development Grant has allocated \$22,000 to DOC for interpretation in the Okere Falls Scenic Reserve at Lake Rotoiti. A proportion of this grant will be used to interpret the 1901 power station which supplied electricity to Rotorua, located on the Kaituna River.

Kim Tatton, DOC

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EAST COAST

The East Coast Conservancy has recently had completed an Historic Resources Strategy which guides local historic resources management. This document should be a valuable planning resource for historic resources work in the area.

After many years of limited development in Gisborne and its rural surrounds, it is certainly all go! Buildings are being demolished and associated sites ravaged by fossickers. Despite Council controls, the lack of an HPT regional officer in the area and my long absences from Gisborne mean we are losing valuable information daily. Another meeting with GDC is planned to attempt to address these issues.

The department is currently working towards the long term protection of the "Cone of Vision" associated with the Cook Landing Site National Historic Reserve. A Planning Tribunal decision in 1990 established a legal "Cone of Vision" to link the Cook Landing Site to the sea and Young Nick's Head. The ongoing reclamation of land in front of the site was compromising its relationship to the sea and the HPT fought for a "Cone of Vision" to link the landing site to the sea and Young Nicks Head. This was given legal status through a Planning Tribunal Hearing in 1990. This cone is protected until the review of the District Plan or until land is reclaimed. Currently Port Gisborne are negotiating further reclamation and the District Plan is being reviewed.

DOC is currently monitoring the conditions of the Cone and working towards a log free, in perpetuity, "Cone of Vision".

Pam Bain, DOC

WELLINGTON

Sue Bulmer, Auckland Regional Archaeologist for NZHPT and later Department of Conservation, marked her retirement from the Department with meetings with her Science and Research Division colleagues on Wellington on 14-15 November 1994. A social gathering of her friends and acquaintances was hosted by Janet Davidson and Foss Leach.

The Department of Conservation has set up two projects to improve management of archaeological sites on reserves. One, nearing publication, has focused on vegetation management; the other, just getting underway, will focus on the related topic of maintenance and repair of earthworks. A further round of visits to Taranaki historic reserves was undertaken in November-December

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1994. Only a few sites have adequate archaeological plans and these are seen as vital to improving the standard of management.

Ann Williams and Bruce McFadgen have begun mapping the Opepe historic Reserve near Taupo. While in Taupo, they also checked a proposed logging route at Whakaipo Bay for archaeological sites.

Local fieldwork by DOC staff has included an inspection of the old Thorndon Fire Station site in Central Wellington, re-location of recorded sites at Baring Head, and mapping of a pit site on alluvial flats in the Wairarapa Valley.

Tony Walton, DOC

OTAGO

Over the spring/ summer months there has been a flurry of work undertaken in Otago. Peter Petchey continues his surveys and excavations for Macraes Mining in the vicinity of their East Otago Mine - surveys of the Ounce and Golden Bar Mines with Jo Dickson in October; excavations of three house sites in December, with Geoff Clark, Bev Parslow and Nicola Smith; and further excavations of another house site and its associated stables in January, with Joss Debreceny, Rachel Palmer and Christy Warr.

Jill Hamel completed a survey of the Lower Nevis Valley to enable DOC Otago to protect the township remains and the extensive dredge and sluicing claims during freeholding of the pastoral leases. She, along with Dougald O'Reilly and Dave McFarland, surveyed the remainder of the Central Otago Rail Trail, photographing the bridges, culverts and other features and checking them against the original railway records. Jill will shortly be producing a publication in the DOC Science and Research series relating to the Rail Trail. Historic features of the Macraes Ecological District were surveyed as part of the DOC Otago Protected Natural Areas programme.

Finally, in December and February, Peter Bristow and Dougald O'Reilly have been recording the extensive evidence of scheelite mining in the Glenorchy region. This industry continued through until the 1970s and provides an interesting comparison of mining techniques through the 20th century. In addition, these two surveyed the Barewood Quartz Reef in January.

Rick McGovern-Wilson, SouthernArc