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FIELDWORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

NORTHLAND

In early December, after a blessing from kaumatua of Ngati Kuri, a large helicopter took off on a flight to Manawa Tawhi (Three Kings Islands). It carried a variety of DOC specialists; an ornithologist, a botanist, a snail expert, pest control officers and squeezed in amongst them a very small archaeologist. Warren Judd from NZ Geographic came along to write about our activities.

We camped on a narrow ridgeline with a vertical drop to the sea only a metre from the tents. Night wandering was dangerous and sleep difficult as the ornithologist ululated to petrels half the night.

The trip was brief, four days in all, and by the time we had organised the camp and crashed through the undergrowth on precipitous slopes to find that Castaway Stream was dry, only 3 full days of survey work and 4 containers of water were left. So dirty but undiscouraged I followed in the footsteps of Bruce Hayward who made brief records of sites here in the early 1980s.

The growth of vegetation in the intervening years has been remarkable. Ditch gardens previously noted over several hectares are now only visible for a few metres, while long lateral terraces have been revealed under tall kanuka forest.

Maori Land Court minutes state that 100 people once lived here, but today the inhabitants consist of large inquisitive skinks, gekos and enormous centipedes said to lay you low for days with a single bite. Bell birds nest a few inches from the ground and follow closely as you push through scrub and spider webs, and near the cliff edges you walk gingerly to avoid petrel burrows - the chicks puke up a foul fishy mess if disturbed.

Overall I gained a deep respect for the people who gardened on and fished from these exposed and isolated islands with only a seasonal treat of mutton-bird to relieve their rugged existence.

Meanwhile a development in Russell led to a further brief excavation near to the waterfront. DOC staff and Simon Best put in test pits at the rear of a house and found a rubbish pit filled with artefacts and yet another long drop - these seem to hold a particular attraction for Simon. The pit contained a wide variety of ceramics and numerous whole bottles which will add to our fast increasing knowledge of domestic life in 19th century Russell.

After Christmas a moving ceremony was held in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Ruapekapeka. It was organised by the Ruapekapeka Pa Management Trust who constructed a *whare wharau*, house

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of the ancestors, near to the site. This contained paintings and early photographs of *tupuna* who took part in the battle. A separate display of *taonga* included Hone Heke's bible and Colonel Wynyard's sword. The religious service was taken by the Bishop of Aotearoa and Major Ashcroft of Waiuru spoke about the battle. This was a significant event which continued throughout the day and brought together more than 300 Maori and Pakeha.

Joan Maingay, DOC

AUCKLAND

At the moment there are several archaeologists, ex-university, ex-department of Conservation and former students who are undertaking free-lance contract archaeology. Among them is Dr Caroline Phillips, who in January conducted test excavations at Kopu, near Thames, at the route of a new bridge access. Archaeologists were employed by Ngati Maru to ascertain whether the access road would affect any of the known sites or others which had not been recorded. The tests showed that the route avoided the two nearby sites and only affected a third, which appeared to have been severely damaged in the 1880s by the railway line.

Caroline Phillips

The volcanic fields of the Tamaki Isthmus have been the subject of archaeological investigations for the last 25 years, over the past decade increasingly driven by expanding urban development. The area is steeped in tradition and has been a focus of settlement for over 500 years. The intensive use of the volcanic cones and the rich soils of their surrounding fields documented in numerous archaeological reports and site records is evidence for widespread agricultural settlement of the area prior to the arrival of the Europeans. The area not only has agricultural resources but an obvious richness of marine life which was an essential part of the economy. In addition, the area is dissected by the numerous waterways, such as the Tamaki River and its tributary creeks, which provided easy communication routes over wide areas and in particular between the two major harbours of the isthmus: the Waitemata and the Manukau. Many large pa adjacent to the harbours and the Tamaki River were clearly strategic in their location, defending access to the agricultural and marine resources as well as to the all important transport routes.

Site R11/1436 is located on a small low headland on the western bank of the Tamaki River and on the route of the proposed roading development of the SE Arterial just to the south of the Waipuna Road bridge). It is surrounded by large pa such as Maungarei (Mt Wellington), Mokoia, Te Apunga O Tainui, Otahuhu and Hamlin's Hill and is just north of a portage route to the Manukau Harbour. In the general area a number of open settlements have been recorded

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and several have been the subject of detailed investigations (Bulmer 1994; Sewell 1992; Foster, R. and B. Sewell. 1988 and 1989 and others). Superficially, the general topography of the site was flat, consisting of pasture bordering on the Tamaki River, and gave little indication of the presence of archaeological features other than a superficial scattering of midden along the banks of a small creek running into the river. Only its locational similarities to other open settlements alerted archaeologists to its archaeological potential.

Test excavations carried out by the Department of Conservation (Sewell and Foster) on the 18th of July 1995 indicated the likelihood of significant subsurface remains and as a result the Historic Places Trust required more extensive archaeological investigations to be carried out prior to the construction of the Arterial.

A full scale archaeological investigation directed by Dr Rod Clough was carried out between November 27th and December 18th 1995. This involved careful machine stripping of the topsoil under archaeological direction and manual investigation of all features exposed.

The sites in the Auckland Isthmus and in particular those along the Tamaki River are particularly important to our understanding of open settlement in Maori society (as opposed to defended pa sites) and to the period of culture contact when both colonial populations and Maori were adapting to new environments and a rapidly changing world. It was thought that R11/1436 would provide us with a rare opportunity to investigate these issues and the excavation methods were designed to meet the requirements of the authority.

The investigation covered a large area in which approximately 2500m² of topsoil was removed by mechanical excavator and any archaeological features exposed were investigated and recorded.

Initially three (north-south) trenches were opened up in the vicinity of the test trenches investigated by the Department of Conservation on the 18th of July 1995. The exploratory trenches were on the banks of and perpendicular to a small creek to the north, with the Tamaki River immediately to the east.

Complex structural features were observed below the topsoil in all three areas comprising storage pits, hangi, midden, stone artefacts, posthole alignments and drainage complexes, clearly representing a period or periods of intensive settlement. Features were then excavated by a combination of traditional archaeological techniques combined with mechanical excavation wherever possible (e.g. Removal of homogeneous fill from the larger pits).

Over the three weeks of field work these three trenches were extended and joined, revealing an increasingly complex archaeological horizon.

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A well mixed topsoil of varying depth (20-40cm) covered all of the excavated area. Below this were intermixed layers of volcanic ash and clay. At the interface between the topsoil and the volcanic ash layers plough lines could be observed in most areas revealing a history of market gardening which continued well into this century. This activity had removed most of the superficial structural remains so that only the deeper features had survived throughout the site and many of the stratigraphic relationships between features were initially difficult to assess.

Excavation of features, in particular storage pits and drains, clarified chronological relationships that had been obscured by the ploughing process. Drainage complexes became an important part of understanding the intrasite relationships and thus investigating the changing activities around the site through time.

Although the site was a complex of intercutting features a general pattern could be discerned in most of the areas excavated, particularly on the embankment of the creek. Each area appeared to have a sequence of at least five phases of activity, each modifying or destroying earlier features. Much of the area near the embankment was used primarily for the construction of storage facilities, although nearing the end of the occupation sequence many of these had been abandoned or backfilled and the area was used extensively as a cooking area, with many hangi remains scattered over the former storage area.

The following general sequence was encountered:

During the initial stages of occupation, topsoil had been removed to construct storage houses on the first hard ash layer: rectangular features with drains and post-holes. These appeared to have been abandoned and later replaced by deeper storage pits. These were again backfilled and later intercut by deeper features with drainage interconnecting some of these pits. At some point in time these too had been cut into and displaced by larger and deeper pits, many having evidence of modification through time. All but two of these were backfilled and postholes in the fill (seemingly unrelated to any pit structures) indicate that again the area was used for activities other than storage. Some of these postholes were covered by midden and hangi deposits, indicative of extensive cooking activities prior to abandonment of the site.

Charcoal was collected from a number of features in order to provide information concerning the economy, environment and dating of the site. Samples will be submitted to Dr. R. Wallace at Auckland University for identification and selection of suitable dating material. A preliminary observation suggests that most charcoal collected is unsuitable for dating either because its context was insecure or it derived from older trees.

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Middens were sectioned and sampled for analysis. In general there were only small deposits of midden on the site and all were related to the later stages of occupation. They revealed exploitation of both estuarine and sandy shore species such as cockle and tuatua (*Australovenus stutchburyi* and *Paphies subtriangulatum*), with some fish (snapper) identified. The midden is currently being analysed by H. Buckley.

Most of the lithic artefacts were recovered out of context, in particular at the ploughed interface and in the fill of pits. They comprised flakes of greywacke, argillite, basalt and obsidian. Hammerstones and remnants of adzes and grinding stones were recovered from the site as was one stone sinker.

The site is complex and there are indications that it was occupied over a significant period of time prior to the arrival to the Europeans. It is not clear at this stage how long occupation continued and it is perhaps dangerous to equate a lack of European materials with a pre-European time scale as sites such as Waiwhau and Raupa (Phillips 1986) have a minimum of colonial artefacts but were occupied during the 19th century.

Some of the storage features are very large (one pit provided over 80m³ of storage) and were located nearer to the small headland pa that jutted out into the estuary. It is possible that these larger pits, nearer the pa, belonged to the hapu as opposed to some of the smaller pits relating to whanau. The archaeology of this site may well provide interesting social interpretation of the past.

Rod Clough

BAY OF PLENTY

Archaeological assessment and mitigation work by contract archaeologists continues at a steady but uneven rate throughout the Bay of Plenty based on District and Regional Council awareness and increased urban development in the Tauranga and Whakatane Districts. However, we are still losing significant sites due to negligence and lack of awareness. In late October a gunfighter pa was damaged by farming practises on Regional Council leased lands at Whakatane. This site, known as 'Rauporoa', is a Ngati Pukeko site which was attacked by Te Kooti's forces in 1869 in association with the sacking of the Te Poronu redoubt and Gueren Flour Mill.

The conference organisations are in full swing. More on that from the NZAA Council report. Hope to see you all there.

Over a two week period in October archaeological investigations continued in the Papamoa area at the Johnson Trust Estate subdivision. Commissioned by HPT, Clayton Frederickson, Simon Best, Ian Barber and Barbara Proctor

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excavated several midden sites. Associated with the midden were hangi sites, storage pits and post hole arrangements. During this same period Bruce McFadgen and Tony Walton from DOC Science and Research were investigating the presence and extent of gardening on the Papamoa dunes. Currently Des Kahotea is carrying out an intensive survey of the urban development zone of Papamoa in conjunction with the Tauranga District Council and HPT.

In December Ken Phillips, a master's student at Auckland University, and Rick McGovern-Wilson excavated what they believed to be the remains of the Paerata Ridge site on Dave Whites property (W15/68) which was formerly excavated by the Whakatane Historical Society in the early 1970s. Unfortunately they found no surviving intact archaeological material from this early or 'archaic' site. A date taken from another midden site on the property came back at approximately 590 bp (pers comm. McGovern-Wilson).

Nick Tupara, who is now working with the Gisborne Museum, spent a weekend during November inspecting and monitoring the condition of the Kaingaroa and Tarawera rock art sites for DOC. Nick has been visiting regularly since 1993 to monitor and make recommendations for the management of these sites. At the request of the Okataina Reserve Board Nick also visited two rock art sites at Okataina to record these sites and make recommendations for their protection.

In January Alexy Simmons guided a group of Bay of Plenty HPT District Committee members and DOC staff through the Bath House and Blue Baths in the Rotorua Government Gardens. The purpose was to highlight the work currently being carried out and further recommended by the conservation plan for the Bathhouse and discuss the issues relating to the preparation of a conservation plan for the Blue Baths.

Lynda Bowers and Amanda Young recently surveyed two 200 hectare blocks of pine forest at Kawerau for the forestry company Olsens P F & Co Ltd who are preparing to production thin this area.

Kim Tatton, DOC

EAST COAST

Conservation work on the Category 1 historic Tauranga Bridge was recently completed and the bridge is again open to the public. Well worth a visit if you are in the Waioeka Gorge.

Nick Tupara has started work on the conservation of the *taonga* at Aniwanuiwa Visitor Centre. This museum has a range of important *taonga* relating to the area and the conservation work is part of a larger project relating to the

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management of the museum.

The Research Unit for Te Aitanga a Mahaki organised a hikoi for their whanau to a range of pa sites in their rohe. It was an extremely interesting day combining archaeological and traditional information on the area.

A natural deposit of moa bones was located in Gisborne township on the edge of an old swamp. The bones identified by Trevor Worthy are from *Dinornis struthoides* and either *D. novaezealandiae* or *D. giganteus*. It is the only known local deposit in the township.

Pam Bain, DOC

WELLINGTON

Warren Gumbley left the Historic Places Trust at the end of 1995 to pursue further study and is being replaced by Viv Rickard. Tony Walton and Kevin Jones have, between them, stood in during the 'interregnum' to keep the paper flowing.

Bruce McFadgen and his Massey University co-workers have completed their report on palaeoenvironmental studies on Matakana Island, Bay of Plenty, providing an environmental and chronological context to recent archaeological work on the island.

An exhibition of Kevin Jones's aerial photographs opened at the Taranaki Museum in January, and will be seen in other centres in due course. Also in January, Kevin made an aerial excursion to the Wairarapa coast to photograph places there.

Vertical aerial photographs have been taken of the redoubt and village area in the Opepe Historic Reserve (Taupo) as part of the continuing Science and Research/Conservancy work there. This is to assist with the mapping of archaeological features.

Both the Site Recording Co-ordinator and Central Filekeeper can now be contacted by e-mail. Chris Jacomb can be contacted at cjacomb@cantmus.govt.nz and Tony Walton can be contacted at sard.nzc.nzonline.ac.nz. As the latter is a shared mailbox please head the message with the recipient's name so the program knows who to pass it to.

Lyn Williams and Pat Stodart of Porirua Museum have been involved in further work related historic places in the District plan.

Tony Walton, DOC