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FIELDWORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

I am grateful to the various contributors for their continued support. If anyone else has information of interest to *Archaeology in New Zealand* readers I would be glad to hear from them.

NORTHLAND

In the hope of escaping extremes of summer heat and autumn rains DoC staff organised surveys of several Whangarei reserves for late March. Rain was not entirely avoided but the surveys were successfully accomplished with the help of volunteers. Otaika Valley is the most impressive of these reserves from an archaeological perspective. It was surveyed initially by Glenis Nevin over a decade ago so a further inspection was required before conservation plans could be drawn up. Archaeological sites are densely concentrated along ridgelines and consist of several pa and numerous and extensive groups of pits under a mixed canopy of regenerating and mature bush. These are some of the most clearly defined and best conserved archaeological features in the Whangarei area.

Surveys and site inspections on private land have been conducted recently by several Auckland archaeologists. Leigh Johnson recorded a large number of sites on a subdivision in the Kaipara. The most significant of these, a ridge pa containing many pits and terraces, is to be retained as a reserve and may be vested in the Crown or the local council. Simon Best also discovered numerous sites on a property at Clendon Cove in the Bay of Islands. Background research indicated that the land was initially sold in 1830 to Clendon, the American Consul, for 5 muskets and a ship's gun. From price increases since then Simon has calculated that it will be worth \$1,000,000,000 by about the year 2080. As he states "the land that sold 166 years ago for 6 popguns will soon, if not already, be equal in value to a thermo nuclear device. "

This may be an extreme case but coastal development is still increasing, with a heap of resource consent applications arriving weekly. Strip development is particularly rife along the east coast, rapidly joining up the original small beach settlements. Obviously this results in threats to many coastal sites. Karikari Bay is one particularly vulnerable area where a tourist venture was stymied in the 1980s on the basis of archaeological and Maori cultural values, only to have re-emerged recently as a proposed subdivision with the whole of the foredunes included in one of the lots. DoC staff are still processing these applications in the hope that part of the load can be transferred to an HPT archaeologist in the near future. It is only fair to add

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that one development company has made a positive move. Carter, Holt, Harvey are making sincere efforts to consult with iwi and have employed Cathy Barr for 6 months to record and monitor sites on forestry blocks. It's good to see the cheerful midget up here every so often.

Back on the DoC estate, the Conservancy is involved in discussions on the management of Mimiwhangata Coastal Park, a reserve with high Maori, archaeological and natural significance. Adrienne Slocombe has produced conservation proposals for the archaeological sites which have suffered considerable disturbance from farming activities since they were first recorded in the 1970s. She has also taken part in meetings and field inspections with representatives of the tangata whenua and a broad range of other specialists and fieldstaff. We are hopeful that this concerted approach will produce a well-balanced management plan.

Historic research staff have also been involved with proposed alterations to the Cape Brett hut, originally a lighthouse keepers house, on the eastern tip of the Bay of Islands. Money has become unexpectedly available (a rare occurrence in DoC) and Russell Field Centre plans to renovate the interior, to accommodate more visitors and provide them with better facilities. Research by James Robinson has produced information on the small lighthouse settlement. The lighthouse itself was built in 1910 and was the first in New Zealand to have a mercury floating light installed. There were three houses to accommodate the lighthouse keepers' families of which only the present DoC hut remains standing. Above ground 'archaeology' indicates that the interior was completely altered in the 1940s so we feel justified in further minor modifications to this part of the building while retaining the original exterior.

A substantial progress report on vegetation trials at Ruapekapeka Pa and Ahipara dunes has been produced by AgResearch. Preliminary conclusions indicate that a mixture of three species could provide long term ground cover with minimal maintenance at Ruapekapeka - chewings fescue (*Festuca rubra*), meadow rice grass (*Microlaena stipoides*) and lotus (*Lotus pedunculatus*). A longer period of time is required for the establishment and assessment of ferns and rata, and further investigation of other native grasses is recommended.

A wide range of species was evaluated in the Ahipara dunes; an exposed strip of the west coast where midden are exposed to heavy erosion from winds, waves and vehicles. So far native species have proved the most promising, with spinifex the only current survivor in the extreme foredunes. There is still potential for experimentation with untried annual grasses and native sedges including pingao.

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The Conservancy has also received archaeological reports from Simon Best, Clayton Fredericksen, Leigh Johnson, Cathy Barr and Simon Hodge. These are much appreciated. We are happy to continue providing information and assistance to students and contract archaeologists who are interested in working in Northland and adding to our understanding of its history.

The latest on Ngunguru Sandspit - Ngunguru Memorial Hall was packed last night, 15 May, for a meeting called by Ngati Wai Trust Board. Ngati Wai planners outlined different options for protection of the spit that may be followed in the near future. These include a District Plan change, a Heritage Order, mediation, direct action and a High Court Appeal. Conservation of the spit is overwhelmingly supported by the local community but in the long run no matter what plan of action is followed this can only be achieved through purchase. Bob Green is currently reported as expecting to realise \$3.3 million on the sale if (when?) he acquires access rights across adjacent Maori land. The meeting was presented with a precis of the NZAA letter to the HPT regarding the decision on the sandspit and with the association's code of ethics. The information that no ethical archaeologist would be prepared to excavate sites of Maori origin without permission from the tangata whenua was greeted with a round of applause.

Joan Maingay, DoC

BAY OF PLENTY

The highlight of the last few months in the archaeological world of the Bay of Plenty has to be the hosting of the 1996 Conference, which took place in Whakatane during April. The conference organising team of Kim Tatton, Amanda Young, Rick McGovern-Wilson and Lynda Bowers managed to survive numerous conference planning sessions and I think we are all still talking to each other. A session at the conference on "Current Issues in Archaeological Site Conservation" was highly successful and useful contributions were made by a wide range of speakers. Tapes of the session are currently being transcribed and will be available for distribution.

Kim Tatton and Arnanda Young have departed to South America for three months and the Department of Conservation is now in the process of seeking a replacement for Kim - hopefully the position will be filled in the near future.

Rick McGovern-Wilson's excavation at Tokitoki drew extensive media coverage and for those who missed his spot on One Network News a summary of the excavation is provided below.

Lynda Bowers

Midden project fieldwork

Two sites were excavated this summer as part of the Bay of Plenty Midden Project. Robbies Midden (V15/ 1209) on an area of Kopeopeo Dunes near Matata proved to be a nineteenth century Maori occupation on the edge of a former lagoon or tidal river channel. A preliminary radiocarbon date of 270 bp suggested that it might be late prehistoric and while the midden was typical of Maori sites, the inclusion of ceramics and a bayonet fragment suggest a contact period site.

The major focus of work this summer was at Tokitoki (W15/ 582) on the eastern shore of Ohiwa Harbour. An 8 by 12 m excavation was dug to a depth of 1.7 m to examine an Archaic cultural horizon which lay immediately on top of a layer of Kaharoa Ash. The excavations revealed that this was an area of back dunes beside a swampy area which had been utilised as a site where basalt adzes, obsidian blades, chert drill-points and fishhooks were manufactured. The site has undergone active erosion over the past 500 or so years and this has probably removed the food-preparation and living areas. Moa and fish bone were recovered from the excavation. Preliminary obsidian hydration dates for the site are clustered in the range 650-680 bp. In conjunction with the excavation, a film crew recorded the work and conducted interviews with tangata whenua to record their histories relating to the harbour and to learn more about their relationship with the harbour. This material will be put together with the results of the excavation to create an educational package for the NZ school system which will portray 700 years of life on the Ohiwa Harbour. The crew stayed at Roimata Marae for the month and many of us will always remember the stay there, more than the excavation. It was a shame when we had to leave.

These excavations completed the fieldwork programme for the eastern Bay of Plenty, and the material from these and other digs will be analysed over the coming winter months and a preliminary report written. It is intended that next summer initial surveys and test excavation will begin around Tauranga Harbour where four sites have already been ear-marked for excavations.

Rick McGovern-Wilson

OTAGO

Archaeological life in the far south has been quite slow in comparison to the rest of the country, helped in no small part by Councils who still cannot comprehend the need for archaeological assessments before issuing resource consents. Sites are being destroyed on a regular basis and there seems to be little that can be done to stop it.

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The Department of Conservation has finally appointed an Historic Resources Officer for the Otago Conservancy, after many years of lobbying by the NZAA Council. Peter Bristow took up the position in February and has spent much of the time since then doing paperwork. Most of his fieldwork has been in the Land Tenure Review Process. He has worked with Dr Jill Hamel on Glen Nevis Station, Nevis Valley, examining areas of large scale hydraulic sluicing and the operating area of an electric dredge which worked before World War 2. They also examined gold-mining areas on Glenlapa Station, western Southland, and in the area of the Dome Burn. Peter is currently preparing a conservation plan for the Young Australian Water-wheel in the Carrick Ranges so that it can be stabilised.

Peter Petchey continues to do resource consent work around the province, especially gold-mining related projects in Central Otago and at Macraes. In February he undertook a survey for DoC at Bullendale (upper Skippers Valley) to update the records of known sites and to record the layout of the electrical system related to the mining. He discovered that in addition to the remains of the well-documented dynamo, there are also the remains of an electrical engine at Bullendale township itself - an artefact that has been overlooked by previous archaeologists working in the area.

Staff in the Anthropology Department at Otago University continue to be busy. Richard Walter and Marshall Weisler have undertaken further work on their projects in the Pacific and these, and the work that Ian Smith is doing with Atholl Anderson on Norfolk Island, will be reported separately. In late April Marshall ran the archaeological field school for Stage 4 students at site J42/4, situated on the coast ca 0.5 km north of the Kakanui River in North Otago. Recorded briefly in a 1978 survey, the site is in immediate danger of ongoing coastal erosion and the excavations, totalling 16.5 m², focused on the seaward face of the wave-cut exposure. Basalt adze production, a cooking area, moa bone, and obsidian were identified.

Charles Higham and a large crew from around the world returned to Thailand over the summer where fieldwork concentrated on three sites: Bam Lum Khao, Non Muang Kao and Noen U-Loke. Excavations at Ban Lum Khao revealed that this is a bronze age settlement and cemetery. An area of 145 m² was excavated to a depth of 2 m to recover data bearing on social, technological and economic variables during the bronze age in this area (1300-500BC). A total of 110 inhumation graves were encountered, along with large quantities of grave goods and faunal material. Non Muang Kao covers 50 hectares and rises 7 metres above the surrounding plain, and the objectives at this site were to excavate the moats and banks for evidence of their configuration, date and use, to open a 5 x 5 m test square on the highest point of the mound, and to undertake detailed proton and fluxgate magnetometer surveys of the mound in order to identify subterranean

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anomalies which might indicate spatial patterns of activity. Such were the complexity and size of the moats, up to 50 m in width, that a mechanical excavator was utilised to cut a trench 70 m long by 6 m deep which provided a clear indication of their development. It appears that the moats were intended for irrigation rather than defensive purposes. Work will continue on this site in the next field season. Preliminary proton magnetometer surveys by Paul White at Noen U-Loke identified a number of sub-surface anomalies which will be excavated next season.

The strength of the research being undertaken by staff in the Department is reflected in the large number of graduate students who are working on research projects in archaeology. There are currently six BA(Hons) dissertations, 17 MA theses, and five PhD dissertations underway on a wide range of topics in New Zealand, the Pacific and South East Asia.

Rick McGovern-Wilson SouthernArc, Dunedin

OCEANIA

In April, Ian Smith (University of Otago) and Atholl Anderson (A.N.U.) undertook investigations on Norfolk Island. Test excavations at Slaughter Bay, Kingston, where adzes of Polynesian form have been collected from the intertidal zone failed to reveal any surviving archaeological deposits. Greater success was had at nearby Emily Bay where a large site is buried more than 1 m below the present dunes. Two areas were excavated, revealing cooking ovens, midden and flake debris. Artefacts recovered include a bone harpoon head, numerous flakes from quadrangular sectioned adzes and a large piece of obsidian. Further work on Norfolk Island is proposed.

In Dec 95-Jan 1996 Geoff Irwin carried out fieldwork in Maluku (Moluccas) in eastern Indonesia with Peter Bellwood of A.N.U., G. Nitihaminoto and J. Siswanto of the National Research Centre for Archaeology, Indonesia and D. Tanudirjo, an Indonesian Ph.D student at A.N.U. This was the third phase of an on-going research project. During the summer they worked on the island of Gebe which straddles the Equator. Gebe is intervisible from Halmahera to the west and high islands adjacent to the Bird's Head region of Irian Jaya, to the east. The island is strategically placed to record contact among these islands. Excavations were carried out in two caves - Golo and Wetef - and an open site - Buluwansi. The main aims of the fieldwork are to collect information on colonisation in (1) the late Pleistocene and (2) neolithic/ceramic times, and to examine the prehistory of what is now (but not then) the Southeast Asian/Melanesian boundary. This area, the Moluccas, also includes the Spice Islands of the Middle Ages, and earlier fieldwork has also turned up evidence relating to Indian and Chinese contacts prior to the arrival of Europeans.

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Amanda Brooks (University of Otago) has returned from an 8 week field trip to Mitiaro in the Southern Cook Islands where she is undertaking ethnoarchaeological research on the structure and organisation of settlement space as part of her MA research. The work falls within the larger Nukuroa Prehistory Project, an ongoing project which began on Mitiaro (Nukuroa) in 1994 under the direction of Richard Walter (University of Otago). The Nukuroa Prehistory Project has completed 3 fieldseasons work on Mitiaro, with faunal and artefactual material currently being processed in the Otago laboratories. The final fieldwork will take place in December 1996.

In cooperation with the National Museum and Ministry of Culture (Western Province) Peter Sheppard and Matt Felgate (Centre For Archaeological Research, University of Auckland) began a 3 year programme of research into the Prehistory of New Georgia (Western Province, Solomon Islands). Preliminary survey (Jan 1 to Feb 15, 1996) was carried out on the barrier islands and adjacent mainland of the western end of Roviana Lagoon (near Munda, New Georgia). A total of 35 sites were mapped and recorded including a very large (0.6 km in length) hillfort complex on Roviana Island, numerous stone platform shrines and skull deposits and 5 ceramic sites producing plain, incised and applique ware. Most locations producing decorated ceramics are on reef flats however one plainware site was located on the New Georgia mainland. Survey and site testing is continuing with Richard Walter joining the project for a 4 to 6 week field trip in June 1996.

The second fieldseason of the Niue Archaeology Project, under the direction of Richard Walter and Atholl Anderson, was completed in mid 1995 and the laboratory processing of faunal remains is ongoing in both the A.N.U. and Otago laboratories. The results of intensive survey and test excavation have failed to reveal any evidence for the presence of Lapita and the conclusions are that Niue was settled late in the West Polynesian sequence. Palaeontological surveys were carried out in the Niuean caves by team member Trevor Worthy (Palaeofaunal Surveys, Nelson) have revealed a suite of extinct avifauna. The final field season will take place in February 1997. At that time surveys of cave and rockshelter sites will be carried out on the west coast in order to locate cultural horizons which overlap with the extinct faunas.

Thegn Ladefoged (University of Auckland) has left for a six week trip to Rotuma with one MA student, Jonathan Wall, where he is carrying out a series of coastal surveys to compliment his earlier inland settlement work and to excavate a coastal site that was identified during survey in 1991.

During 1995 Toru Yamaguchi (Ph.D student, University of Auckland) worked with Prof Masashi Chikamori excavating early cultural horizons on Pukapuka atoll in the Northern Cook Islands. Important finds included a rectangular

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basalt adze which is currently being analysed by Peter Sheppard with a view to sourcing. The Northern atolls have no local sources of stone and delineating patterns of contact, either west with the Samoan islands, or to the south with Rarotonga is an important issue in the prehistory of the archipelago. Radiocarbon dates are being processed in the Waikato Radiocarbon Laboratory and on the basis of these results a return trip to Pukapuka is planned for 1997. Between July and September 1996 Toru will be returning to Rarotonga to work on surveys and excavations of early settlement sites and ceremonial structures. A range of marae from several topographic zones including offshore islets (motu), beach ridges, alluvial soils and the inland hills will be selected for detailed mapping and excavation.

Since late 1993 Marshall Weisler (Anthropology Department, University of Otago) has been conducting intensive surveys and archaeological excavations throughout the Marshall Islands as part of the on-going interdisciplinary program entitled, "Origins, Development and Transformation of Prehistoric Marshallese Society." With the completion of this past summer's field season - in which he was joined by M.A. student Graeme Somerville-Ryan - nearly 50 sites have been recorded on Maloelap, Ujae, and Ebon atolls and more than 100 m² excavated. Plans are to begin work on Utirik atoll this summer, with additional field research slated for Bikini atoll in 1998.

The Anthropology Department, University of Auckland, has recently appointed Dr Melinda Allen currently at the Bishop Museum, Honolulu, to the academic staff. Melinda Allen is Ph.D graduate from the University of Washington and is a specialist in East Polynesian archaeology having completed her Ph.D. research on the island of Aitutaki in the Southern Cook Islands. Bringing an expertise in material culture studies, environmental archaeology and evolutionary theory, her appointment will add new strengths to the Auckland Department.

Richard Walter
University of Otago