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FIELDWORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

AUCKLAND

Various archaeological activities involving Auckland archaeologists have been underway during the summer quarter and as usual, what follows is a grab sample of a few.

In early December, Louise Furey and Brenda Sewell led a small team on a successful five-day excavation of an eroding dune site at the northern end of Opito, Coromandel Peninsula. Brenda will give a report of the excavation at the Conference in Russell and an interim report is planned for one of the coming issues of this year's *AINZ*.

The University of Auckland Field School is currently being held at Bell Block, Taranaki under the guidance of Simon Holdaway. A post-contact period house site is the focus of the excavation and will be reported on at a later date.

After 18 months of planning and negotiation, the survey of the Gulf Islands has begun. The training session for the 16 archaeologists taking part has been held and work on the first stage - Waiheke Island - has started. Rakino and Ponui Islands will follow. The survey is being co-ordinated by Rod Clough, Kim Tatton and Simon Best, who, along with others, have devised a system for site evaluation. With input from ARC, HPT, DoC and NZAA the system appears thus far to be working extremely effectively. Independent groups have arrived at similar 'scores' using a range of criteria in assessment of the same sites. The survey has been commissioned and financed by the Auckland City Council. We look forward to a report of the results as the system has the potential to become a new benchmark in site recording technique.

Sarah Ross, now on maternity leave, kindly gave us a summary of work going on at the Auckland Regional Council, before she departed.

She says the ARC has almost completed the Kaipara coastal survey from the Okahakura Peninsula to the Kaukapakapa River. Kim Tatton and Vanessa Tanner have walked through the mudflats for about 35 kilometres recording over 150 new archaeological sites. Vanessa is also undertaking some much needed updating of the Cultural Heritage Inventory including cataloguing the collection of historic maps and survey plans which will be searchable for place names and features on the database.

The last few months have been a busy time of year for the Heritage staff formulating budgets and projects for the new financial year. They aim to complete four more conservation plans for historic structures on their Regional Parks network. These will be the Hinge House at Huia, Ashby Homestead at Tapapakanga (Thames coastline), Sullivan's Homestead at Mahurangi, and Okoromai Bay homestead at Shakespeare Regional Park, Whangaparaoa.

Parks Rangers have recently undertaken a two-day training session. The objective was to provide new and existing staff with an awareness of cultural heritage resources in the Regional Parks estate and the range of issues surrounding their management. Included were an iwi perspective, aspects of the botanical heritage, and the process involved with determining heritage significance. Also covered were the production of conservation plans, the development and application of conservation policy, assessing management impacts; how information is gathered to assess potential impacts on heritage sites and the interpretation of historic places. All this held in an historic building with visits to archaeological sites.

The building of stone walls at Ambury Regional Park has kicked off – volunteers are welcome to assist. If you would like to learn how to construct a dry stone wall during your weekends, contact the ARC Enviroline on 09 366 2070 for details.

Progress is being made with the integration of the local authorities in the Auckland region. A liaison group has been set up of representatives from each city and district Council who have heritage responsibilities. The group meets regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest and it is hoped that better communication throughout the region will promote better heritage conservation. Sarah, incidentally, will be away from her ARC post until November.

At the end of February the Association of Social Anthropologists of Oceania held their annual conference at the University of Auckland. The reason for

mentioning this is that one of the working sessions entitled "Sweet Potato in the Pacific – A reassessment" included papers by several of our members and is of direct archaeological interest. Much of the archaeological evidence for the sweet potato remains indirect but recent ethnographic, oral historical, demographic and paleo-ecological evidence for its impact across the Pacific helps to give new perspectives on the role in historical and Pacific contemporary societies of one of the region's most significant staple crops. The session was organised by Chris Ballard of the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University (email <chris.ballard@anu.edu.au>). Doug Yen was the discussant. 13 papers were presented including Roger Green talking on the introduction of the sweet potato and other plants into Eastern Polynesia from South America in the 11th to 12th Century AD, Helen Leach on the variable status of the sweet potato in Polynesia, and Mike Burtenshaw (Graham Harris, Foss Leach and Janet Davidson) on their experimental kumara gardens in the Cook Strait region: assessing the yield for effort.

The extension to the visitor centre at Huia Lodge / Cornwall Park is now open. Thanks to those who had an input, particularly Geometria. The displays concentrate on the Maori history and particularly an archaeological view. There are some spectacular digital reconstructions. For a taste go to <http://www.cornwallpark.co.nz/centennial.asp> 

To end on a personal note, we have two milestones to celebrate: our congratulations to Brent Druskovich (Bioresearches) and his wife who have a brand new son, Joshua, born on the 20th February, and to the Association's kaumatua, Dr Roger Green who turns a venerable 70 this March.

Sad news was that the geologist Les Kermode died at the end of January while on a trip to Rangitoto Island. Les will be remembered fondly by many of us who used his expertise on the geology of the Auckland region. His vast knowledge cheerfully imparted, will be greatly missed.

Kath Prickett, Auckland Museum

BAY OF PLENTY

Ken Phillips and Phil Moore continue to work on the Waihi Beach Sewerage Scheme for the Western Bay of Plenty District Council. This involves the reticulation of Athenree, Bowentown and Waihi Beach at the northern end of Tauranga Harbour. Fifty previously unrecorded sites have been found in the process of monitoring the project so far, consisting primarily of middens and

cultivated soils. They have also excavated a coastal occupation site along the Athenree foreshore. The project is expected to last another two months.

Ray Hooker has been busy with subdivision work, particularly around the rural outskirts of Tauranga. This included mapping a pa site originally recorded by Tony Walton in 1979 by aerial photograph.

To assist the Upgrade Project, the Tauranga District Council has initiated an "Archaeological Report Collation Project". Student planner, Rebecca Eng has been working in conjunction with Ken Phillips to compile a bibliography of archaeological "grey literature". The aim is to increase the accuracy of records relating to archaeological sites in the district and develop a GIS Project that shows the areas covered by reports.

The proposal to establish the Bay of Plenty's first regional park at Papamoa Hills gathers momentum, recognising the area's significant archaeological, cultural and landscape values. Rob McGowan of the University of Waikato continues to organise workshops for the public to experience this amazing cultural landscape. Peter Rolleston and Rachel Darmody present an evening lecture followed by a site tour the next day. The public response has been excellent with large numbers of people attending.

Rachel Darmody, NZHPT

WELLINGTON

There is little to report in the way of fieldwork over the last couple of months. In late November a party from Science & Research Unit (DoC) visited the Marlborough Sounds and recorded, amongst other sites, the World War II defence works on Blumine Island and the late nineteenth century antimony smelter and mines at Endeavour Inlet.

Bruce McFadgen and Steve Bagley have been looking at the erosion of coastal sites in Golden and Tasman Bays. They visited the area in early December 2001 and found signs of severe coastal erosion that has been ongoing for about 400 years, apparently precipitated by a large earthquake that caused subsidence of the coastal zone and a tsunami. These events may be related to why no early sites have been found in the area, and have a bearing on a resource crisis that apparently occurred there about 400 years ago. The work is part of an SRU project assessing the impact of ongoing erosion on prehistoric sites.

A recent publication on tsunamis is Goff and McFadgen (2001). See list of recent reports and publications below. The Department has published a volume containing many of the papers from its well-attended Historic Heritage Workshop held in Wellington in July-August 2001. The topics range from policy and statements of intent to methods and case studies.

Tony Walton, DoC

CANTERBURY

Chris Jacomb directed excavations at Watson's Beach (H45/10), near Taieri Mouth, Otago, from 14-18 December. This site was discussed by Brooke Tucker and Helena Christie in the last issue of *Archaeology in New Zealand*. The work was carried out by a large group of volunteers, including students from the University of Otago, representatives of Ngai Tahu, local people and other archaeologists. The site is a coastal Archaic site and consisted of several earth ovens and fire features directly overlaid by a predominantly mussel midden. Small amounts of moa bone were recovered, along with moa eggshell. There was also sea mammal bone, including juvenile seal, bird bone and rat bone.

Chris also conducted a small-scale excavation at French Farm, near Akaroa, in early December. The house on the site is believed to have been one of the earliest on the Peninsula (possibly built in 1840) and, as the name suggests, is believed to have been French in origin. Two 2 x 1 metre squares were excavated, one to investigate the sub-floor construction of the house and the second at the edge of a possible second house.

As well as completing these excavations, Chris has been visiting registered archaeological sites in Otago. To date, he has visited 40 sites, recording GPS locations and updating the existing information about the sites.

On 11 December, Ian Hill ran a work day at the Acheron Accommodation House, built in 1863 by Ned James. The accommodation house lies at the entrance to the Molesworth Road from the southern end. This is an annual trip to carry out maintenance on the building, such as repairing cob and roof thatching and lime washing the walls. During this trip Chris Jacomb and Katharine Watson mapped the site, including the building, garden remains, post holes associated with yards and the remains of roads. Ian has also been recording GPS locations for the military installations at Godley Head. These

military sites are all from World War II. Following the war, the area was used for compulsory military training until 1958.

Katharine Watson has carried out two excavations in central city Christchurch. The first of these was on the corner of Lichfield and Colombo Streets. The site consisted of large quantities of nineteenth century fill. In one area six stone piles were found under the fill. The second excavation was at St Michael and All Angels School, where Chris Jacomb's assistance was invaluable. Ian Hill also put in some time, as did Alan Eng, one of the architects overseeing the project. St Michael's School opened in a temporary church in 1851, and a dedicated school building was opened in 1859. During the excavations, the foundations of these buildings were found. Bottle diggers dug at both sites while the excavations were taking place. Katharine has also been doing the preparatory work for the NZAA Upgrade Project in Selwyn and Christchurch city, as well as working for Peter Petchey in Stewart Island and Kurow (on Meridian's Project Aqua scheme).

Katharine Watson, NZHPT

OTAGO

The annual excavation field school of the University of Otago Department of Anthropology was run by Ian Barber and Richard Walter between 28 January and 10 February 2002. The field school continued the work begun in 2001 at the eroding midden complex site No. I44/21 at Purakaunui Inlet, Otago. The full report will be published in the June 2002 issue of *Archaeology in New Zealand*.

In December 2001 University of Otago students Brooke Tucker, Colleen Stuart and Winnie Matahaere participated in an NZHPT run excavation of eroding archaeological deposits at site No. H45/10, Watson's Beach, South Otago (also reported in this issue). This investigation followed a long-term monitoring programme at this site by Otago students Tucker and Helena Christie as reported in the December 2001 issue of *Archaeology in New Zealand*.

Ian Barber, Otago University