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FIELDWORK AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

Auckland

There has been much activity on various fronts in the region recently, but too much for a comprehensive coverage. What follows is a grab-sample.

Auckland Museum

The exhibition *Islamic Art and Patronage*, a collection of objects from the Kuwait National Museum is currently on show until the middle of June. The works displayed span a period from the 8th to the 18th centuries, and regions stretching from China through the Middle East as far as Spain. The curator, Kirsty Norman, is an archaeological conservator who was involved in the handing back by Iraq of these treasures looted from Kuwait. Be on the lookout for the exhibition scheduled to follow in July—*Blood & Gold: Treasures of Ancient Peru*. Billed as an exhibition of the gold, power, and ritual of Ancient Andean culture, featuring in particular, the ritual of human sacrifice, there will be much of archaeological interest including a visual feast of pottery objects.

The series of Institute lectures titled *Pacific Origins* was fully subscribed and a successful means of offering recent ideas and results of research projects to a wider audience. *From Asia to Aotearoa* was the subject of the opening talk by Nigel Prickett. Louise Furey followed, with a talk on early settlement with particular reference to Houhora. Geoff Irwin's topic was *The archaeology of late Maori settlement* illustrated by his work at Kohika which is due to be published shortly. To conclude, Lisa Matisoo-Smith's *The Kiore story* presented an insight into her work using DNA to trace the origins of the Pacific rat.

Marianne Turner has begun the second stage of work (funded by the Green Foundation) on the large collection of Pitcairn stone material after completing an initial inventory and assessment. There are 20,000 pieces in this collection, providing ample scope for research questions for Marianne (and possibly others) to pursue for some time to come!

Department of Conservation

Dave Veart reports:

Work at Fort Takapuna Historic Reserve

In the 19th century the only way to get into Fort Takapuna was to cross the drawbridge and go down the staircases at either of the two underground entry points. Over time however the old Russian Scare fort was altered, first to get rid of the moat and associated drawbridge, then to convert it into a naval ammunition magazine in the 1920s and again in the 1960s when the navy “recontoured” the area above the fort prior to building a new gunnery school. These alterations meant that the old underground entrances had been filled in and a number of other surface features had been obscured. The old buried stairwells were however acting as large sumps where water gathered and made parts of the underground sections of the fort very damp. As part of the Department of Conservation’s ongoing repair of the fort it was decided to excavate the stairwells and at the same time expose one of the old 1880s roofs and to reseal it.

The excavation was done mostly by machine, with hand digging by DoC archaeologists and field staff. Using a recently redrawn plan for guidance, the tops of the two stairwells were soon exposed, as was the roof of the old underground Artillery Store. While the stairs and the subterranean courtyards were in good condition we found that the damage done by the 1960s redevelopment was greater than anticipated. The tops of the old stairwell/courtyards had originally had battlements at surface level, similar to the details on the fort itself. These had been smashed off and pushed into the hole. Similarly the old Victorian observation post for the fort appears to have been smashed up and also used as fill. The foundation for this structure was exposed as part of the work. The remains of a large 1920s ammunition loading ramp was found and the largest piece of this has been remounted in its original location. The 19th century roof has had a modern waterproof membrane added and has been recovered with earth. The stairs have been repaired and in some places the old retaining walls have been strengthened. New steel doors are being fabricated and will be installed after the old doorways have been reopened. These are concreted over at present. When work is complete, the public will again be able to enter the fort through its original entrances.

Increased funding for North Head

As part of the recently announced government funding package for heritage, a number of structures at North Head Historic Reserve are to be repaired and strengthened. Most money will go toward repairs at the old Armed Constabulary

Barracks on the summit of the volcano. This building was erected in 1885 by the Armed Constabulary as part of their fortification work for the Russian War Scare of that year. It was finally vacated by the Royal New Zealand Navy in 1996 after 111 years of continuous use by the armed forces. During this time it was used for accommodation, a prison, a band room and finally as part of the Navy's Communications School. It is to get, among other things, a new floor, and the veranda, demolished during WW II will be rebuilt. Repairs will be made to a Second World War gun emplacement which is at present closed to the public because of the danger of falling concrete. The 1886 8 inch disappearing gun at South Battery, North Head is to have further repair work carried out using parts from a similar gun found at the Massey Memorial in Wellington and on long term loan from the Department of Culture and Heritage. As part of this work it is hoped to return the gun to a stage where it can be made to fire a blank charge.

University of Auckland

Congratulations to Peter Shepherd for his appointment earlier this year as Associate Professor and head of the Archaeology Department.

Lisa Matisoo-Smith is involved in organising a conference for the Australasian Society for Human Biology being hosted by the Anthropology Department, University of Auckland. The Annual Conference is to be held 7–10 December, 2003. Expressions of interest in sessions or papers are invited.

The theme is *Populations, Migrations and Interactions: A Walk through Time*. The Pacific Rim holds the evidence for some of the most ancient and most recent of human migrations. Following this theme, proposed sessions at the annual meeting of the ASHB will focus on ancient human evolution (including, it is hoped, the latest Groves–Thorne debate), evidence for migration in the Pacific, the health impacts of migration, and forensic anthropology in an area of diversity. Proposals for sessions or for papers will be gratefully received. The first call for papers and registration is on the website.

For information or to be added to the email list contact

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Or for updates

<http://www.arts.auckland.ac.nz/ant/ASHB/Flyer.htm>

<http://school.anhb.uwa.edu.au/ashb/>

Marianne Turner is offering a Continuing Education course in the ‘Winter Week on Campus’ programme called *Get out Your Gumboots! Archaeology in New Zealand*. The lecture series introduces the approaches and methods of archaeology with a focus on the work of archaeologists of New Zealand. Topics will include: the identification of archaeological sites, how archaeologists record and excavate sites, the management and protection of archaeological sites, who were the moa-hunters?, and the archaeology of Auckland from early prehistoric to historic times.

Bioresearches

Since becoming part time, Brent Druskovich finds he is busier than ever. He has been involved in surveying alongside State Highway 20 through Avondale and Waterview, finding approximately 30 new sites. Both Maori and European, they range from stone wall remnants, middens, pits, a terrace, an agricultural mound and karaka trees. A mill site was found on the edge of Oakley Creek. David Gardener has been assisting Brent with this work, particularly with monitoring.

Briefly

Russell Foster, Brent Druskovich, Barrie Baquie and others have been working for the North Shore City Council checking unscheduled sites for inclusion on the District Plan.

Despite being Auckland City Council scheduled sites, both the Albert Barracks site in Albert Park and the Blockhouse Bay pa have recently been damaged by council contractors. The Historic Places Trust is considering prosecutions. In the case of Albert Barracks, Council heritage manager George Farant was horrified to learn that the contractor had been unaware he was working on an archaeological site while replacing footpaths. Apparently the consultant managing the project was unaware the remains were close to the surface and gave approval.

We have another archaeological baby among us. Congratulations to Kim Tatton, who has a daughter, Lola, now almost three months old.

Kath Pricket

East Coast

Otatara Pa National Historic Reserve is one of a number of large, complex earthwork sites in New Zealand. It is a place of cultural significance to Ngati Kahungunu and in particular Ngati Paarau of Waiohiki Marae who are the kaitiaki for Otatara. There are visible surface features covering over 44 hectares and until recently the reserve area totalled only 33 hectares. The area outside the reserve was recently at risk due to a planned subdivision by the landowners.

After extensive negotiations, approximately 8 ha has been purchased by the Department of Conservation or donated through reserve contribution, and we are currently negotiating the purchase of a further 1.8 ha. This ensures that the majority of the site is in public ownership which will enormously enhance the integrity of this nationally important site. And for those of you with long memories, you will be pleased to know that “Aidan’s pits”, the pits that were featured on the Historic Places Trust poster, are finally to be protected.

Hans and Russell have recently completed a detailed 3D map of the Reserve. Further work will be done on the recent land purchases and a report completed outlining recommendations for management. It is planned that this work will be published in conjunction with a conservation plan completed by Lynda Bowers.

Future work at the Reserve will include implementing a development plan for the carpark and entrance which acknowledges the importance of the site, developing a monitoring project to monitor the effects of stock on the site and a large scale interpretation package in association with Waiohiki Marae.

Gordon Jackman, recently returned to the Gisborne/Tairāwhiti area after three years at Auckland University, is monitoring the forest harvest operations in Paroa Forest just inland from Tolaga Bay. C.F. Olsen & Co. Ltd., who oversee the harvest, has developed a protocol with Te Aitanga-a-Hauiti on the management of the over 18 archaeological sites in the forest that is working to everyone’s satisfaction so far.

Also an addition in April of a new ablutions block to the historic Matawhereo Church on the Poverty Bay flats gave rise to an archaeological excavation on the front lawn (the site of a new underground infiltration system). The church was school from 1866 to 1872 when it bought by the Presbyterians and has been a church ever since. Broken slates, slate pencils and ink bottles remained in the lawn from the school days. Broken cups, saucers and plates, broken glasses and bottles, a kitchen knife and fork as well as numerous sheep and beef bones were found in the lawn. A silver chain, 2 half crowns, 2 sixpences and three pennies were also found. According to a Scottish carpenter on site—it was an old Scottish custom for the bride to throw pennies over the shoulder at weddings. A couple were married at the church while the dig was in progress, while it was agreed by all that it was unfortunate for them to have the whole front lawn excavated, they did throw the three pennies found on site as part of the ceremony for a very historic and hopefully lucky marriage! (they did come back).

Pam Bain

Wellington

With Bruce McFadgen's recent retirement, the DOC Science & Research Unit currently has just three permanent staff working in the historic resources area, comprising two archaeologists (Kevin Jones, Tony Walton) and an historian (Tony Nightingale).

The DOC Auckland Islands expedition of February and March 2003 has provided considerable new information on historic resources there, and on their condition. The work involved a search for new sites, including prehistoric and sealing sites, and detailed recording of known sites. Measured drawings were made of castaway depots and boatsheds and WWII coast watch huts. A plan was made of the Enderby settlement (1850–1852) and outlying farmhouses. The extent of rata clearing by *Erlangen* (a German steamship) in 1939 was also mapped.

Kevin Jones has an article in *Growing Today* (March 2003: 39–41) on 'saving archaeological sites.' This is one spin-off from the project on 'caring for archaeological sites.' The manual is currently being revised for publication, after an extensive round of consultations. Kevin also took vertical aerial photographs of the middle and upper Shotover River in Central Otago in April.

A Science & Research Unit publication of particular note is Bruce McFadgen's *Archaeology of the Wellington Conservancy: Wairarapa. A study in tectonic archaeology*. The publication provides an overview of the prehistory of the region and re-interprets archaeological and environmental evidence to show how seismic events and tsunamis may have been responsible for some of the documented changes in the environment and settlement in coastal areas in prehistory.

Mary O'Keeffe is monitoring work on the realignment of SH2 affecting a part of the Rimutaka incline, north of Upper Hutt. Recent bush clearing revealed the bench of the original alignment of the old road. She has also completed an assessment of a possible realignment of SH1 between Te Horo and Otaki on the Kapiti Coast.

April 18 this year was ICOMOS's annual day for cultural heritage, with this year's theme being maritime heritage. Mary arranged for an article on maritime archaeology to appear in the *Dominion Post*: a good article was marred only by the failure to mention the ICOMOS day, which was the reason for the article in the first place. Mary was supposed to be travelling to Hong Kong in late April for a workshop on the ratification in Asia/Pacific nations of the UNESCO

convention for the protection of underwater cultural heritage but due to SARS this has been postponed to November.

Tony Walton

Canterbury

Katharine Watson carried out survey work at Bradshaws Terrace, near Westport, in later March. This area was mined for gold from the mid-nineteenth century through to the mid-twentieth century. Much of the archaeology has been destroyed subsequently by earthworks associated with preparing the ground for dairying (known as flipping and humping and hollowing), but there are remnants of some mining systems, including tunnels, water races, and tailings. This area is to be mined again, but it is unlikely that this will destroy any more of the archaeology. Katharine has started work on a site in central Christchurch where there has been a hotel since at least 1866. The building that has just been demolished was built in 1879. Excavation will take place at another historic hotel site in Christchurch within the next two months. This is the site of Nancy's Hotel, where there has been a hotel since 1851. One of the local bottle clubs will help with this excavation.

Katharine Watson and Ian Hill visited Kura Tawhiti/Castle Hill to consider the affects of a Department of Conservation planting plan on recorded archaeological sites within the Department's reserve. During the visit, one new site was recorded. This was a name carved in a boulder, along with dates: "S. A. SPRANGE DEC 1879 TO JAN 1886". This name is carved on another recorded site within the reserve. Buffer zones have been established around each of the recorded sites (there are now eleven within the reserve, most of which are rock shelters) and no planting will occur within these zones.

Katharine Watson