NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

GOLD AT HARBOUR CONE, PENINSULA COUNTY, OTAGO.

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(The following is a precis of a paper in which the author extensively reviews the historical records of goldmining at Harbour Cone, and details his present-day findings. Ed.)

On 11 Feb.1887, the Otago Witness records that gold-bearing stone was first discovered at Harbour Cone, Hooper's Inlet, about 1871. A sample shipment of quartz was sent by the Hooper's Inlet Gold Mining Co. to Melbourne for analysis. A return of from 4dwts. to 10dwts.per ton was shown.

Professor Ulrich, in a report in 1875, described the rock formation of the area, and compared it with the Thames gold field. The names of the proprietors of the gold mine are given as Messers Forbes and McAuley and Wises Companies Directory of 1875-6 lists 'Hooper's Inlet G.M.C.'. Despite Prof. Ulrich's opinion that the mine would pay handsomely, Forbes and McAuley abandoned the workings as unprofitable. It was re-opened in 1887 by Sheldermine and Basan.

A report by Professor Park (Reports NZ Geolog.Survey.1888-9) states that if veins could be found in the rock, mining would be rewarding. Then in 1905, C.N.Boult (Trans.NZ Inst.,Vol.38) describes the characteristics and occurrence of auriferous syenite and associated rocks in the area. He prepared a contour map which is reproduced with his paper. Boult's conclusion after comparisons with the country rock of Thames and Coromandel goldfields, was that in Harbour Cone gold occurred comparatively richly in one rock at least. However a cutting from the 'Star' in 1924 reports that geologists gave it as their opinion that the district was not gold country.

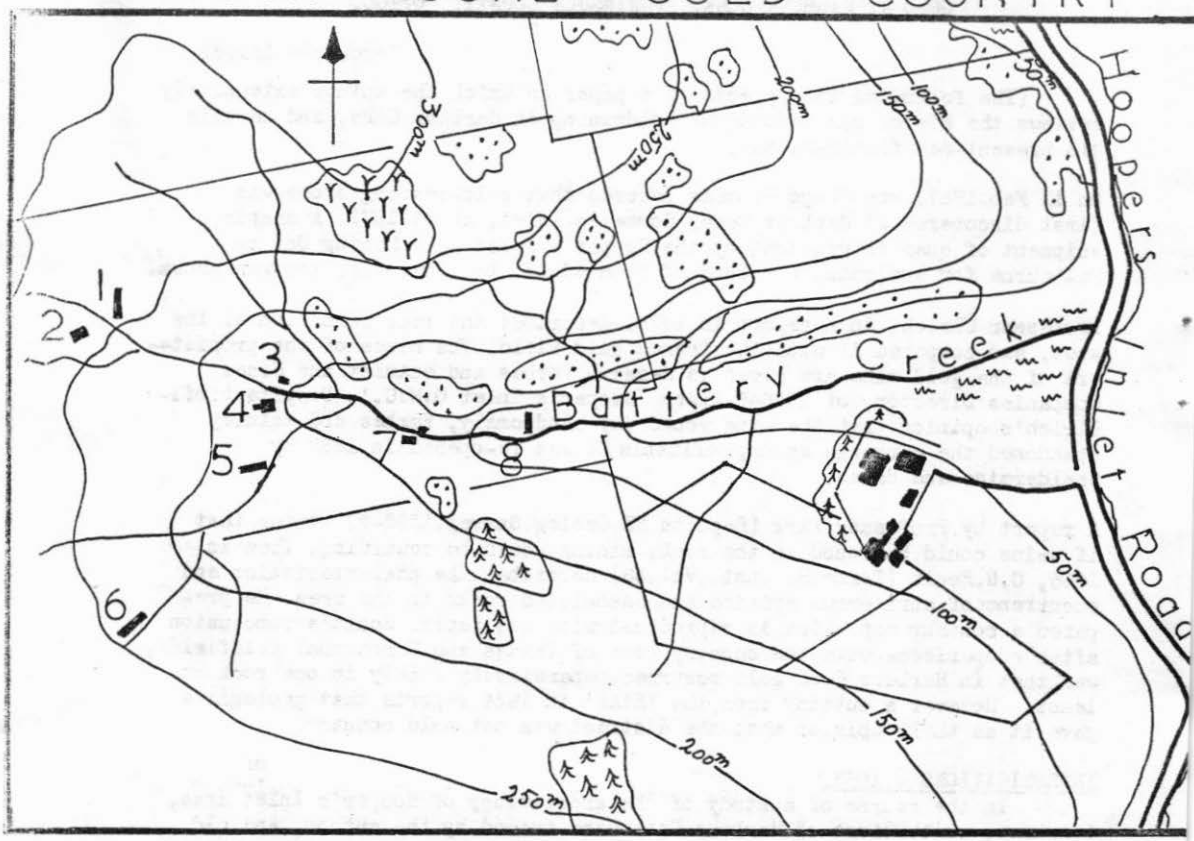
INVESTIGATIONS : 1963.

In the course of a study of the archaeology of Hooper's Inlet area, trackways at the foot of Harbour Cone were traced by the author, and old workings were discovered. It was ascertained that these were the workings referred to in Boult's paper of 1905.

The vicinity of the creek was examined for earthworks,ditching and spoil heaps, but the natural creep to which the whole area is subject makes it difficult to distinguish the artificial. The main workings which have been traced are as follows :- (The numbers refer to the sketch map)

MAIN SHAFT with a drive visible when the water is low,soundable to a depth of 30ft. Remains of timber at shaft mouth. (4)
DRIVE about 100yds. up the creek to the north-west, with ditching. (1)
OPEN CUT near the above drive. (2)
DRIVE about 100yds. south of the main shaft, on the same contour,with slag heap. (5)
DRIVE about 200yds. below the main shaft, on north side of creek. (8)
DRIVE on hillside to the south-west of the main shaft. (6)
OPEN CUT and small pit, near main shaft. (5)
Remains of a structure in the streambed below main shaft. (7)
Ditching near main shaft and damming up the creek to the north-west.

HARBOUR CONE GOLD COUNTRY



REVIEW :

"SCIENCE IN ARCHAEOLOGY". Ed.by Don Brothwell and Eric Higgs. 'A Comprehensive Survey of Progress and Research'. 595pp. 95 photos, 92 line drawings, 66 tables. Basic Books Inc., New York. 1963.

All those who closely follow the ever increasing contributuion that all branches of modern science are making towards the unravelling of world prehistory, will find "Science in Archaeology" an excellent and enlightening work. A series of 54 well-written, lucid, illustrated articles by international specialists in their respective fields provide the reader with a modern basic textbook on the techniques and workings of the many varied scientific disciplines that are contributing in a practical way to all aspects of archaeology. With a reading of this work, one is almost forced to realise that today the modern archaeologist is rapidly losing the right to claim that his discipline remains a "pure science", for he has now become a collator of results contributed by a vast array of other branches of science, and upon their testimony his conclusions and hypotheses must rest.