



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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## GREAT BARRIER ISLAND

Wynne Spring-Rice

During the Christmas holiday, I was fortunate in being able to carry out some archaeological work in an area which to my knowledge is comparatively untouched.

My primary objectives were to record pa sites and other evidences of Maori occupation and to record artefactual material found by local farmers. Most of the work was done in Harataonga Bay, Oruawharo Bay, and Tryphena Harbour. Of the fourteen pa sites noted, ten were headland pa of the upland type; three were ridge peak pa with sea on one side; and the other was a small rocky island surrounded at high tide. Two of these were recorded, the small island in Oruawharo Bay and the extensive headland pa at the western end of Harataonga Bay. (Fig.1.)

Harataonga Bay

This pa (Fig.3.) is notable for its six transverse ditches, one of which is double. There is evidence in places of a lateral ditch on the inland side. The numerous pits are rectangular, semi-subterranean, readily discernable, with bright green vegetation contrasting with the browner grass outside. These pits range in size from 2 by 2 feet to 18 by 12 feet. There are also eight circular depressions of a yard in diameter, one a hole 3 feet deep hollowing out below, which may on excavation prove to be subterranean bell-shaped pits. Fifty yards up the ridge from the last ditch is a steep, very distinct track to the beach, and also one on the other side of the ridge, down to the rush-filled hollow in a gully. Pits continue along the ridge behind the pa for a mile and a half, extending out on to two headlands. Along Harataonga Beach are shell and bone middens, also an abundance of obsidian flakes of two different types, a light translucent grey, sometimes banded, and a darkish green. A grinding stone, a greenstone ear-pendant and several adzes have been found along these middens. Also a bone fish hook and disarticulated human bones. Unfortunately, the adzes have been dispersed and there is no record of them.

Oruawharo Bay

Oruawharo Bay is dominated at its southern end by the ridge peak pa on Goat Hill. This has a stone-faced scarp between two of the terraces. On the lower slopes of the hill are two adjacent areas about 30 feet square, cleared of stone,



(Figure 1)

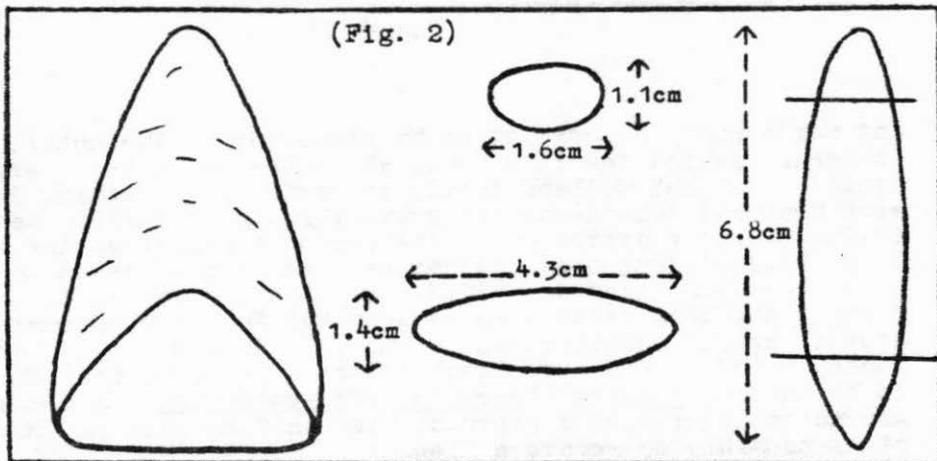
and surrounded on three sides by stone rows. The uphill side is open. Behind the sand dunes along the beach is a large swamp. When the Medland family in their early farming days were draining this swamp, they cut through an earlier Maori drain. Quite a system of drains became apparent as the water-level lowered, but these cannot be seen at present as the swamp is again flooded. Various artefacts were dug from this swamp, including several ko (now in the Auckland Museum); two gourds, which disintegrated on exposure to the air; a large wooden pounder in an excellent state of preservation, thought to be made of pukatea (Laurelia novae-zelandiae); and a small greenstone adze with a scarf started half an inch in from the side, possibly to remove a flaw.

### Tryphena Harbour

I was told by Peter Blackwell of an adze factory site in the Tryphena area, and a search rediscovered a quarry site on a small flat at a bend about a mile up the Mulberry Grove Stream. There were several blocks of fine-grained homogeneous basalt and numerous flakes and roughouts lying in deep manuka humus, but there was no evidence at the quarry that the roughouts were worked beyond the flaking stage. There is another quarry site on a ridge to the seaward side of Windy Hill, but I was unable to visit this. Several greenstone ear-pendants and a greenstone hei tiki have been found on Gooseberry Flat, the beach north of the large pa which dominates Tryphena Harbour. There is an extensive shell midden on the slopes behind the beach, and covering the small headland at the northern end.

### Obsidian

Mention was made previously of two different types of obsidian. Roger Green had asked me to discover if there were any obsidian deposits on the island. The first find of note was the abundance of obsidian in the road metal. This metal is dredged from the Awana Stream which flows eastwards from Mt. Hobeon-Hirakimata (hira - abundant, widespread; mataa - obsidian). My husband chipped a flake from a boulder in the north branch of the Kaiarara Stream and found it was of the greenish type. Tom Blackwell and his son Peter told me of huge boulders lying on top of the Te Ahumata Plateau (ahu - heaped up; mataa - obsidian). It remains to be seen whether this is the source of the translucent grey obsidian found in such abundance in the beach middens.



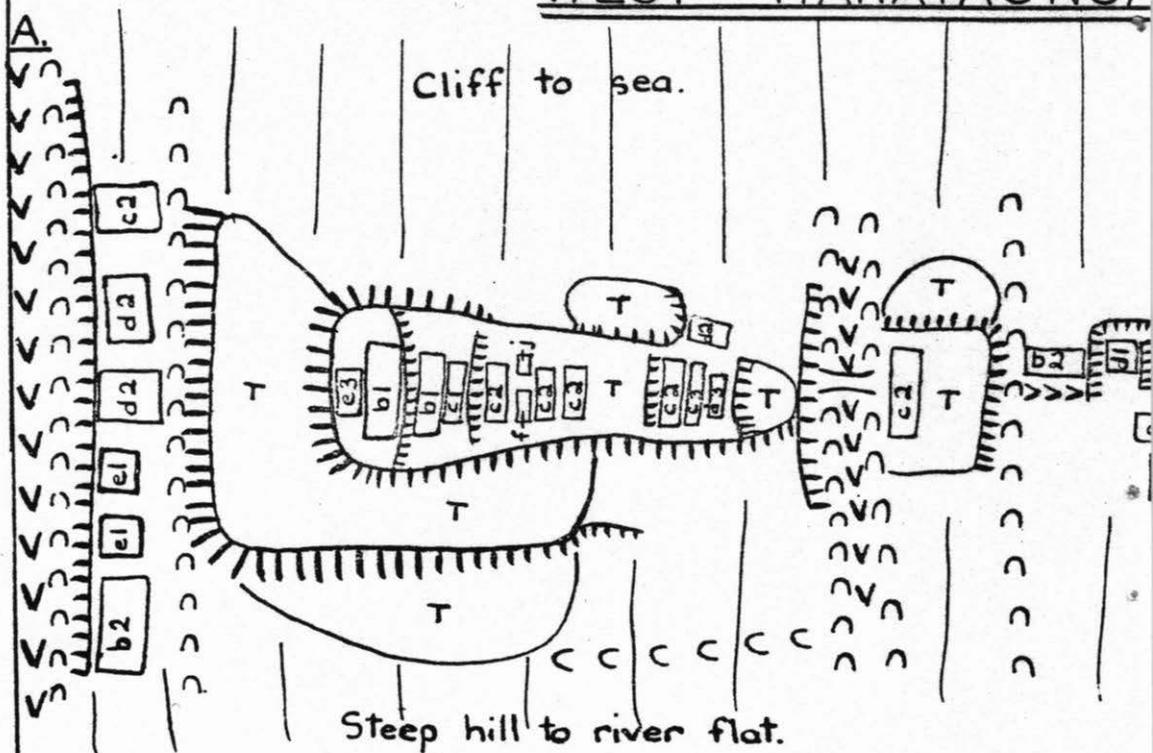
### Adzes

Artefact record Forms were filled in from the collections of Messrs Blackwell, Medland and Overton. All the adzes except one were of type 2B, that is, rectangular in section with an undifferentiated butt. The exception was a small triangular-shaped adze, oval in section from the poll to the chin, and with a triangular bevel. (Fig. 2.) The adze was completely ground. In many respects it bears a resemblance to the so-called "Melanesian type".

### Conclusion

Great Barrier Island is intensely interesting to the archaeologist. I have merely skimmed the surface of the recording work, to say nothing of more detailed analyses of pa sites, middens and obsidian deposits. I would like to record my thanks to Mr. and Mrs. Overton of Harataonga, Messrs S. and J. Medland of Oruawhoro, and Messrs L. Beazley, T. and E. Blackwell and F. Hinton of Tryphena for their information, and for permission to record their artefact collections and explore their farms.

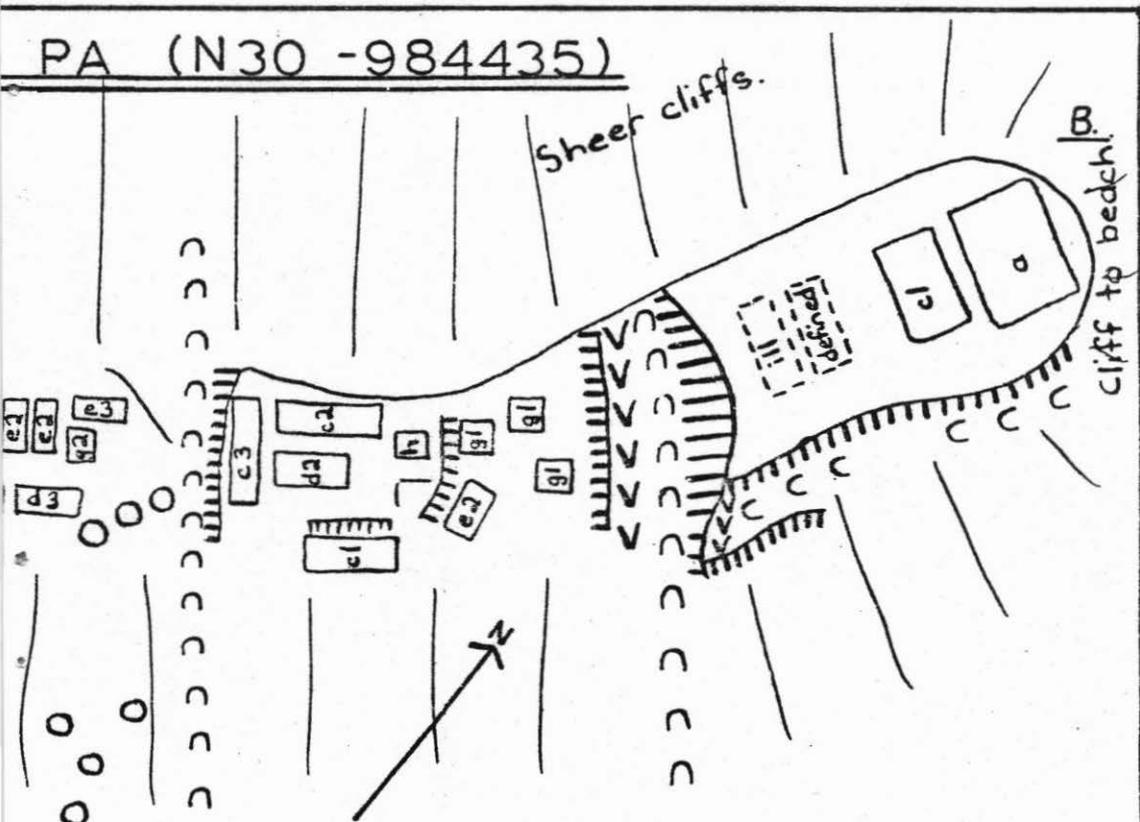
# WEST HARATAONGA



## LEGEND (Pits measured in feet)

|           |           |          |      |
|-----------|-----------|----------|------|
| a - 18x12 | c2 - 12x6 | d3 - 9x3 | f -  |
| b1 - 15x9 | c3 - 12x3 | e1 - 6x6 | g1 - |
| b2 - 15x6 | d1 - 9x9  | e2 - 6x4 | g2 - |
| c1 - 12x9 | d2 - 9x6  | e3 - 6x3 | h -  |

PA (N30 -984435)



SCALE

2 j - 2x2  
4 circular 3x3  
3 T - terrace  
3

Distances paced therefore map  
not to scale.  
Distance A - B computed from  
aerial photograph -  $12\frac{1}{2}$  chains.

Figure 3)