



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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REPORTS of ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK
From the lower half of the North Island



HAWKES BAY - by W.H.Hartree, Napier.

Hawkes Bay with its abundance of easily reached occupations sites, both fortified and unfortified, and its well-recorded history provide a large and attractive field for archaeology. Despite these advantages there is no active group of amateur archaeologists to follow up the favourable situation. There is, however, an active historical group at Napier and interested individuals in other Hawkes Bay centres. Now that procedures, techniques and recording have been improved and standardised, the ancient sites of the Hawkes Bay may be induced to unwind some of the tangled skein of Maori history.

Traditional references to an earlier people in the Hawkes Bay are many but whether they are akin to Duff's moa-hunters, with similar tools and ornaments, has yet to be proved. Unfortunately, the mouths of the Hawkes Bay's navigable rivers Tukituki, Ngaruroro and Tutaekuri, have periodically shifted in the past and were frequently flooded thereby destroying or burying any possible Archaic river-mouth sites. No doubt moas were hunted and eaten by the early Hawkes Bay inhabitants as they were in other parts of New Zealand. No moa-hunting sites have so far been recognised though the Cape Kidnappers to

to Ocean Beach area could very well provide such a site.

There is considerable evidence to prove the existence of several species of Anomalopteryx, Pachyornis and Dinornis moas living in the Hawkes Bay after the Taupo pumice shower of A.D.150 and as no major climatic or volcanic upsets followed, these moas must have been present when the first Polynesians arrived in the area.

The greater part of the Maori occupation sites are coastal; the most outstanding areas being the Mahia Peninsula, Wairoa, Ahuriri, Waimarama, Ocean Beach, with further small settlements in every little sandy bay and river-mouth along the coastline. Inland, most of the sites are by lakes and rivers where ducks, eels and pipis were plentiful. There were also many small fortified sites, often in forested country, such as those at Te Pohue, Te Haroto, Taravera, etc.

We are fortunate in that Hawkes Bay has had a considerable amount of its history, both traditional and documental, recorded by such explorers, missionaries and authors as Capt. Cook, W.Colenso, Bishop Selwyn, Samuel Williams, Guthrie-Smith; T.Lambert, W.T.Prentice, Elsdon Best (whose 'Tuhoe' touches on the fringe of Hawkes Bay) and many others. The "History of Hawkes Bay" by J.G.Wilson and others contains an excellent bibliography relating to this region. Despite all the above, considerable Maori history has been lost and many occupational sites have not been recorded or have no known history.

There are several problems of Hawkes Bay prehistory (similar to those in other parts of New Zealand) which active field archaeology may be expected to solve, such as the relationship of durable cultural stone, bone and wood of the earliest occupants to that of the Maoris that Cook and other discoverers found here; and the past population patterns in the district. A study of the midden material could give evidence of the birds and animals living in the Hawkes Bay at an early date. In the northern areas of the Hawkes Bay the Taupo pumice shower of A.D.150 is a widespread and easily recognised marker band: so far no occupational layer has been found under it. The 'black pumice' of Wellman may be still more valuable as a marker. Research could also show what effects the Polynesian settlers had upon the forests of this region and upon the now extinct birds which inhabited them.

As a primary line of research, an inspection of Museum and private collections of Maori artefacts may give evidence of a distinct early cultural pattern and may even point to areas where field archaeology might be safely expected to produce interesting results.

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INLAND PATEA - by R.A.L.Batley, Taihape.

The term "Inland Patea" refers to the region surrounding the upper reaches of the Rangitikei River and its main tributaries, the Hautapu and Moawhango Rivers. In an archaeological sense it embraces the entire upper catchment of the Rangitikei River and the surrounding high country. The region lies within Grid Square no. N.33 of the National Grid System and includes the highest peaks of the North Island.

The greatest proportion of the area lies between the 2000ft. and 5000ft.