



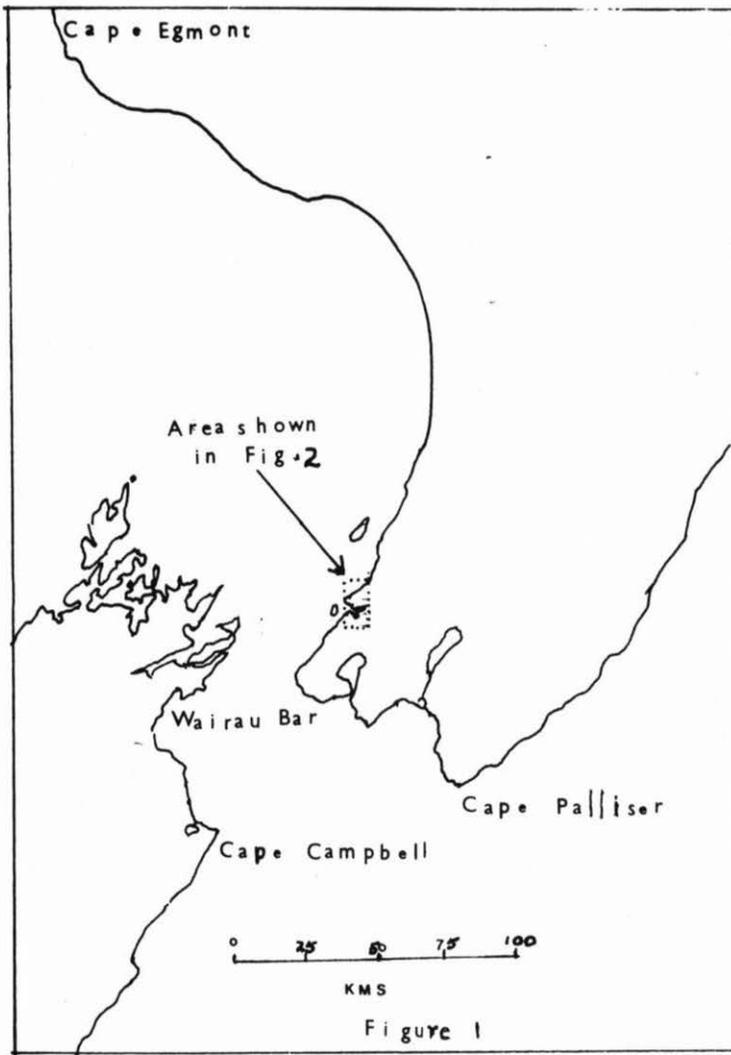
NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

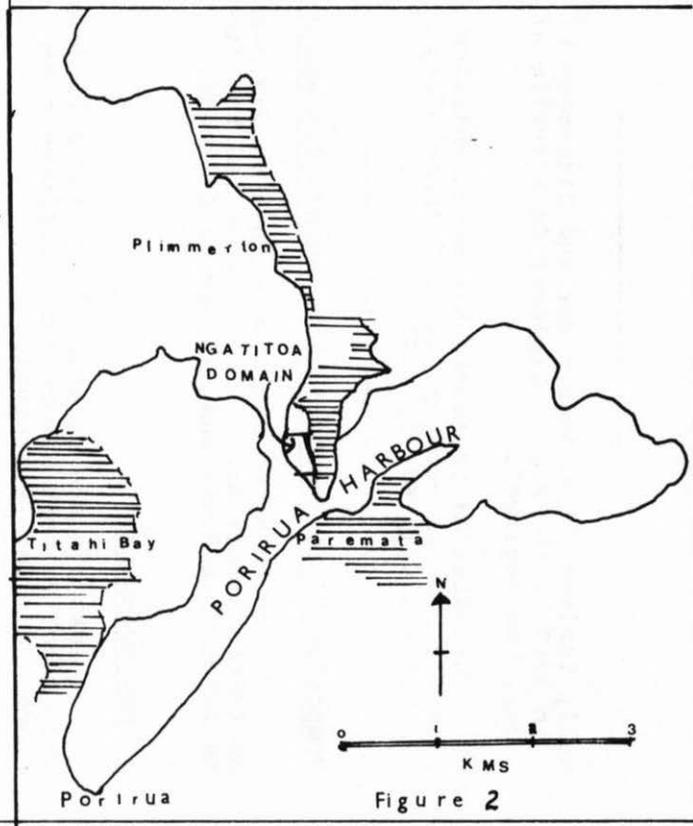


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MAPS SHOWING LOCATION
OF SITE N 160/50



INTERIM REPORT OF SALVAGE EXCAVATION AT PAREMATA - (N160/50)

E.D. Sinclair

In early 1963 the writer was engaged, along with three or four other amateur archaeologists, Mr and Mrs K.G. Clarkson of Upper Hutt and Messrs J.K. Nichols and W.C. Carkeek, both of Wellington and both now deceased, in what was essentially a salvage operation of what then remained of an early occupation site originally of Moa Hunter Maori provenance situated in the Ngatitoo Domain. Today the domain is administered by the Porirua City Council but it was then under the control of the Hutt County Council.

At the time of the operation now reported the site was under threat of obliteration by the impending development of a clubhouse and amenities for a local cruising club. Portions of it had been bulldozed in preparation for development by the club, and as a result of the bulldozing, extensive midden areas had been exposed with quite a wealth of artefacts laid bare for the taking.

Following discovery in Square I 11 (see Plan 1) of two human burials and recovery of several artefacts from the surface by the writer, one of the burials was the subject of an excavation, from 1 to 3 November, 1962 by a group from the Wellington Archaeological Society headed by C.D. Smart who reported on this activity in N.Z.A.A. Newsletter. The report concludes with the observation that the site is "the most promising so far encountered in the Wellington district" and goes on to say "with so much already lost in the Wellington district, it is obvious that the Paremata-Porirua area has a prior claim to any investigation carried out in the near future".

This encouraging report was followed shortly afterwards, over a period of about three weeks during December 1962, by a controlled excavation carried out by the Wellington Archaeological Society under the direction of Janet Davidson, then of Auckland University. I am indebted to her for supplying me with a copy of the plan which was used. As is shown (see shaded squares on Plan 1) only a very small proportion even of the known site was investigated, and as can also be seen, the squares investigated were all, except J 11, on disturbed, bulldozed ground.

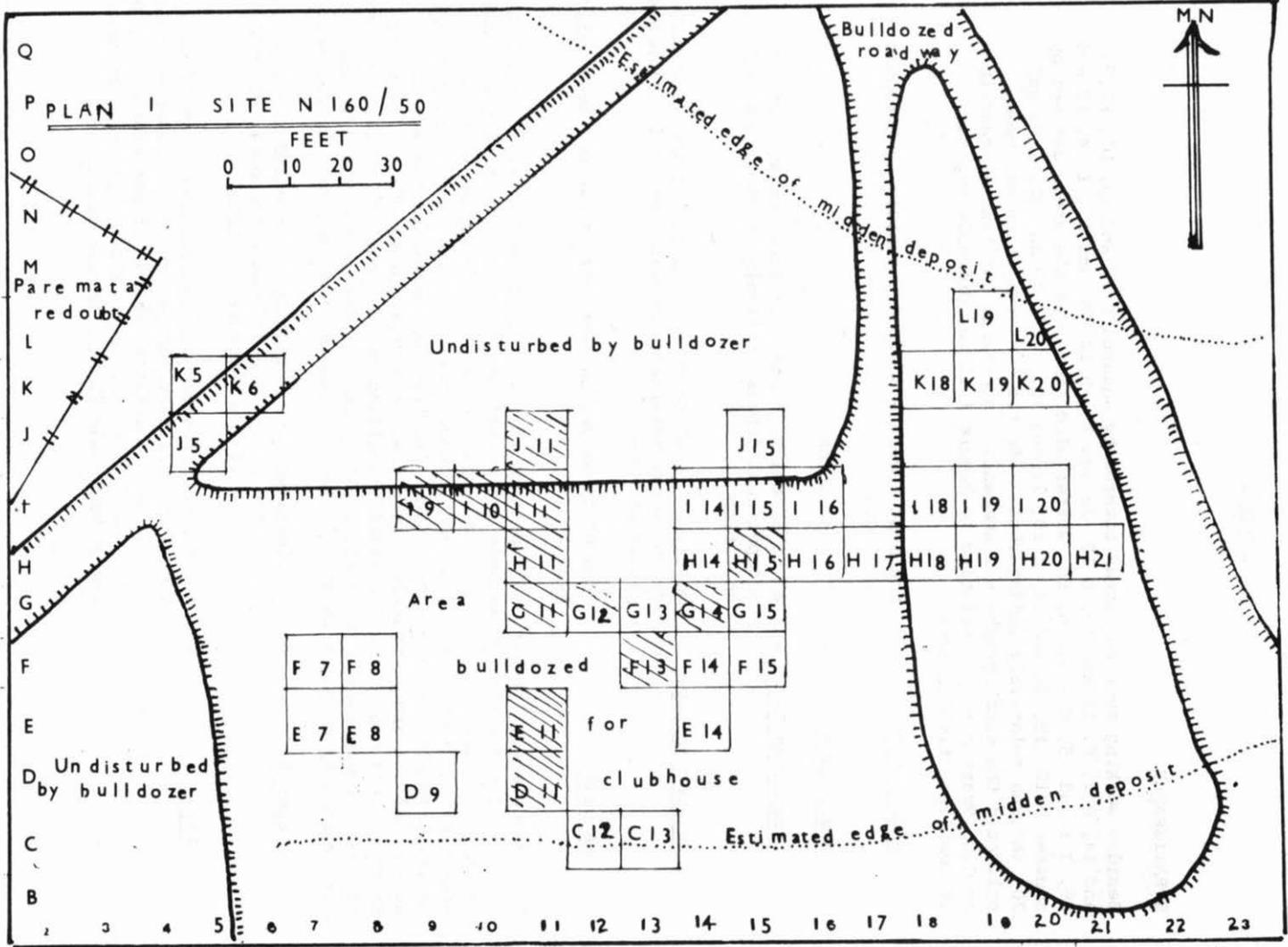
On the evidence of test holes dug, the dotted lines on the plan indicate the estimated edges of the occupation area immediately to the north and the south of the squares which had been excavated by the Archaeological Society members. However, in addition to these potentially promising areas there were also large additional areas immediately around and within the old Redoubt enclosure and to the south of the Redoubt. On visual indications alone the lines of square C to M were particularly rich in midden remains and subsequent levelling activities by the Mana Cruising Club, whose clubhouse, and car and boat parks, now cover the area, uncovered numerous additional artefacts. What remained of the site in 1962 would have covered the best part of an acre and it is probable that it originally covered a much greater area, to include portions, at least, of grassed playing fields which lie to the east of the vertical line 23 on Plan 1.

Although at one stage there appeared to be a possibility that the Society would wish to carry out further work on the site, by mid-February 1963 nothing had eventuated. The reason for this inactivity was not known to me but perhaps it was (to quote C.D. Smart again) that the area "was badly disturbed" and was thought "unlikely to prove of value to the archaeologist". Whatever the reason, the inactivity during these vital weeks was a matter for great regret because it was well known that the greater part of the established midden area was doomed to be obliterated.

On the suggestion of Dr Roger Duff of Canterbury Museum the writer therefore decided on a salvage operation in which he was soon joined by the Clarksons, Carkeek and Nichols, and for perhaps a further two months, whenever time, health and weather permitted, some of us, or all of us, carried on this activity until all too soon, we were obliged to call a halt.

Initially we concentrated our attention on the rectangular area which had been levelled by the bulldozer as the site for the new clubhouse and at times we were working in and around, and under, the boxing and profiles which had been erected for this new building. Soon the building operations reached the stage where we could no longer carry on in this area, so three of us moved eastward to the tear-shaped, undisturbed (by the bulldozer) area shown on the Plan, and worked over about a dozen of the squares there as shown on the grid.

Whilst parts of this area had suffered some post-European disturbance (for instance, a trench had been dug along a line running from Square L 19 to Square F21, apparently in order to plant a row of shelter trees, some of which were still growing there) quite extensive portions of the area investigated had not suffered any disturbance whatever.



STRATIGRAPHY

Besides working over the areas covered by Squares C 12 and 13, D9, E7, 8, and 14, F 7, 8, 14 and 15, G 12, 13 and 15, H 14, 16 and 17, I 14, 15 and 16, J 5 and 15, K 5 and 6, the writer also excavated the areas defined by squares H 18, 19, 20 and 21, I 18, 19 and 20, K 18, 19 and 20, L 19 and 20, an area relatively undisturbed. In the old area which had been bulldozed the stratigraphy was somewhat conjectural but that as described in C.D. Smart's report relating to square I 11 was probably typical. It comprised five layers:-

- Soil Layer - the most recent - 3" to 4", containing European artefacts
- Shell Layer - 3" to 5" thick
- Occupation Layer - 4" to 6" thick, containing large amounts of occupational debris, including a wide range of shellfish
- Occupation Layer - mostly 2" to 4" thick - containing relatively less occupational material, including moa and seal bones within an oven
- Natural - some 6" clean yellow sand giving way to clean yellow gravel

In the new area, however, this pattern of stratigraphy was by no means repeated. In the squares worked by Nichols and myself there was an almost complete absence of any shell layer, although I am aware that the Clarksons, working in approximately squares F 18, 19 and 20 encountered a very thick overlay of shell, probably all of a foot thick. Another marked difference was the absence of any gravel underlay, even down to a depth of six feet. Whereas Smart records two occupation layers totalling up to about 10" thick, I record only one occupation layer of about 12". The squares on the H and I lines were virtually undisturbed with a clear stratigraphical sequence as follows:-

- Layer 1 - 7" windblown sand, slightly discoloured and deposited during the past 100 years since the early military occupation of the Paremata Redoubt.
- Layer 2 - 2" of sand, slightly discoloured and slightly compacted during the military occupation of the 1840s - containing European artefacts (sherds of porcelain, clay pipe fragments, brass and iron nails, regimental buttons, musket balls and flints, bottle glass, etc.,)

- Layer 3 - 12" - the prehistoric layer of occupation comprising greasy, charcoal - discoloured sand, impregnated with charcoal and heavily compacted. Midden content was marked by concentration towards bottom of bones of moa, moa egg shell, dog, seal, bird and fish bones. Shell fish, mainly cockle, common only in upper 3" of layer but without constituting any discernible stratigraphical break.
- Layer 4 - Natural. Clean, coarse, yellowish sand for about 12" after which the sand became darker in colour, finer in texture and more compacted as it approached an original sea level, which could be deduced from the occurrence of isolated large cockle shells.

In the K and L lines of squares there had been a good deal of post-European disturbance and the European artefactual remains suggest that an armourer's or blacksmith's shop could have been sited there during the military occupation. The remaining space, roughly squares J 18, 19, 20 and 21 was the "claim" worked by the late Mr J.K. Nichols. As we both worked to the same system, usually along the same continuous front, and frequently at the same times, I am able to state that his "claim" was mainly of undisturbed media and that it was rich in artefactual remains. It is not my purpose here to attempt to detail his activities or all his numerous recoveries, but one which deserves mention, and without doubt his most interesting and enigmatic find was a collection of fourteen pieces which, on reassembly, make up a necklace. This necklace has been described and illustrated by Mr I.W. Keyes (1967) under the sub-heading, "The Paremata Necklace".

According to Dr Duff (pers. comm.) to whom Nichols showed the necklace units, some of these comprised the well known, spike form whittled from sperm whale teeth which were a feature of Fijian culture after the advent of the Pacific whalers in the early nineteenth century. On this account Dr Duff insists that these must be disregarded as artefacts connected with the Maori occupation of the site.

The most significant item which Dr Duff recalls from the Nichol's collection was a first stage "reel" necklace unit in the form of a mid-section of the femur of the *Euryapteryx gravis* moa. This, he considers, could only have been acquired from the Cook Strait shores of the South Island, probably from Wairau Bar, as this species of moa was not found in the North Island. (Common in South Island, present also in North Island. Ed.)

Among my own avian assemblage Mr R.J. Scarlett has identified the following seven moa species:-

Anomalopteryx didiformis

Dinornis giganteus

Dinornis struthoides

Dinornis novaezealandiae

Euryapteryx geranoides

Euryapteryx curtus (?)

Pachyornis mappini

The association of these moa remains with the artefactual and midden remains implies human use of the moa from the time of the occupation of this site. Moa egg shell fragments found by the writer would appear to include the greater part of the crushed egg of a small species as the bulk of the fragments were concentrated in one pocket as if an egg had collapsed on itself.

Two other significant items in the Nichol's collection recalled by the writer were a Duff type 4A adze in light coloured Nelson argillite, about 24 cms in length and in very good condition, and the longitudinal half of a "whale-tooth" necklace in whale ivory.

In my own operations, because time was running out, I spared little time or care on the removal or examination of layer 1, while from layer 2 I selected only the more "interesting" items of early-European association for retention. These include hundreds of clay pipe pieces - very interesting, because of the diversity of shapes, sizes, colours, sources, and decorations on the pipes, regimental buttons, musket balls and flints, coins, etc.

Layer 3 was subjected to careful excavational procedures, trowelling, brushing and sieving, but a minimum of time was devoted to recording procedures so that the positioning of artefacts is not as precise as would have been the case in less hurried circumstances. In my records the position of artefacts is related to square and layer only, but not to position in the square or to the depth in the layer.

An examination was also made of the natural, below the lowest occupation layer. In some places this yielded its rewards as for example in the recovery of a cache of three adzes.

RADIOCARBON DATE

In May 1963 a sample of midden bones of moa (species not identified), dog and seal was taken from a one foot square pocket from Layer 3 in square K 21 and was submitted to the Institute of Nuclear Sciences. The date yielded was N.Z. 510:514 ± 48 years B.P.

PORTABLE ARTEFACTS

The following lists relate to my own finds only. I am aware that each of the other operators working alongside me was making recoveries comparable to my own. In the listing no reference is made to the source of each item as to square or layer but a record is held of this information.

<u>ARTEFACT</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ITEMS</u>
Adzes	5
Adze roughouts	3
Chisels	9
Adze or chisel portions	14
Moa bone chisels or portions	6
Flint or obsidian knives or scrapers	13
Drill points	14
Pumice tops (two doubtful)	6
Files, grinding stones or polishers	13
Bone awls	5
One piece fish hook, ivory	1

<u>ARTEFACTS</u>	<u>NUMBER OF ITEMS</u>
Points from lure minnow shanks - some incomplete or broken	5
Bone tattooing chisels - one doubtful	3
Bone barbs of two piece fish hooks	13
Bone needles or needle portions	11
Toggle or toggle pieces	2
Fish lure shank of shell	1
Cutting flakes of flint, etc.	Over 100, aggregate weight in excess of 2500 grams
Ivory tab, blank for one piece fish hook	1
Paua shell strip for hook inlay (?)	1
Fish hook cores, bone	20
Minnow shanks (?), incomplete	2
Fish hook fragments or pieces	11
Obsidian flakes, knives, etc.	Several hundreds, weighing in excess of 1700 grams
Tribrach	1
 <u>ORNAMENTS</u>	
"Reel" necklace unit, ivory	1
Imitation "whale-tooth" pendant, bone	1
Shell pendants	3
Bone needle pendants	3
Polished, imperforate, immature sperm whale tooth	1
Greenstone tab, ground and polished but imperforate	1
Greenstone tab, ground and polished, perforated	1

Porpoise tooth necklace (?) unit, perforated	1
Necklace of Dentalium nanum	1
Imitation human incisor, shell, perforated	1

MISCELLANEOUS

Oval stone, ground. Use unknown	1
Dog droppings	450 grams
Moa eggshell fragments	137 grams
Pigment container (?), stone	1
Kaka leg-ring fragment, bone	1
Serpentine lumps, one polished	3
Stingray barb, ground	1
Worked bone or shell pieces	29

MIDDEN MATERIAL

Scattered bone occurred all over the areas of the site which were investigated. Where there had been little or no disturbance the bone was most evident in layer three. In this layer there was also a scattering of shellfish remains, the most conspicuous being cockle and turban shells.

Several ovens and scoop fireplaces, as well as one "hearth" were encountered and in two separate places there were "pads" of crumbled pumice covering roughly circular areas about four feet in diameter, as if an effort had been made to provide sand-free areas, perhaps for the preparation of food. The entire site was, of course, sand dune country and in those places where midden had intruded the sand had become discoloured with charcoal, was fairly closely compacted and was of a greasy texture, in fact with such a grease content that there was always to be found a greasy, black scum on the surface of bath water after cleaning up following any excavation work.

All skeletal remains recovered were consigned to Mr R.J. Scarlett of the Canterbury Museum and I am very deeply indebted to him for his tremendous effort in identifying such a large quantity of bone material. His identification list includes the following:-

<u>Anas s. superciliosa</u>	(
<u>Anas</u> sp. cf <u>Hymenolaimus malocorhynchus</u>	(Teal, scaup or duck
<u>Anas</u>	(
<u>Apteryx Australis mantelli</u>	Kiwi
<u>Apteryx oweni</u>	Kiwi
<u>Aptornis otidiformis</u>	Giant rail
<u>Orctocephalus forsteri</u>	Southern furseal
<u>Callaeas cinerea wilsoni</u>	Kokako
<u>Canis familiaris</u>	Polynesian dog
<u>Chenopsis summerensis</u>	Extinct swan
<u>Circus</u>	Extinct N.I. hawk
<u>Eudyptes pachyrhynchus</u> subsp.	Penguin
<u>Eudyptula minor</u>	Penguin
<u>Gallirallus minor</u>	Weka
<u>Gallirallus australis greyi</u>	Weka
<u>Haematopus</u> sp.	Oystercatcher
<u>Hemiphaga n. novaeseelandiae</u>	N.Z. pigeon
<u>Heteralocha acutirostris</u>	Huia
<u>Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus</u>	Blue duck
<u>Larus dominicanus</u>	Gull
<u>Larus (bulleri or novaehollandiae scopulinus)</u>	Gull
<u>Macrorhinus leoninus</u> Linné	Sea elephant
<u>Nestor Meridionalis septentrionalis</u>	Kaka
<u>Notornis m. mantelli</u>	Takahe
<u>Pachyptila</u> cf <u>vittata</u>	Prion
<u>Pachyptila</u> cf <u>turtur</u>	Prion
<u>Palaeocorax moriorum</u>	Extinct crow
<u>Phalacrocorax carbo novaehollandiae</u>	Black shag
<u>Philesturnus carunculatus refusater</u>	Saddleback

<u>Podiceps cristatus australis</u>	Grebe
<u>Prothemadera n. novaeseelandiae</u>	Tui
<u>Puffinus gravia</u> or <u>huttoni</u>	Shearwater
<u>Rallus</u> (?) sp	Rail
<u>Rattus exulans</u>	Rat
<u>Sceloglaux albifacies</u>	Laughing owl
<u>Sphenodon punctatus</u>	Tuatara
<u>Strigops habroptilus</u>	Kakapo
<u>Thalassarche cauta</u> subsp.	Mollyhawk
<u>Thalassarche</u> cf <u>bulleri</u>	Mollyhawk
<u>Anomalopteryx didiformis</u>	Moa
<u>Dinornis giganteus</u>	Moa
<u>Dinornis struthoides</u>	Moa
<u>Dinornis novaezealandiae</u>	Moa
<u>Eurapteryx geranoides</u>	Moa
? <u>Eurapteryx curtus</u>	Moa
<u>Pachyornis mappini</u>	Moa

SEAL, CETACEAN AND FISH

Quantities of these were recovered but apart from some schnapper bones they have not been identified. (See Leach, this issue. Ed.)

EUROPEAN ARTEFACTS

Evidence of early European contacts around the 1840's was plentiful. It included sherds of porcelain, two early coins, (one dated 1806), regimental buttons, (65th and 99th regiments), musket balls, musket flints, brass and iron nails, rusted carpenters' tools, bottle glass, butchers' bones, (sheep, pig and beef), as well as large quantities of clay pipe fragments of which 1246 grams were recovered.

DISCUSSION

It is well known that this site has been the scene of much human activity over a very long time. Unfortunately, despite several spurts of archaeological interest that have been concentrated on it during almost a century, it does not seem possible from the evidence gathered so far to establish with sufficient precision a chronology for its occupation from the time of the first human settlement of the southern part of the north island of New Zealand to the present time.

However the demonstrated association with man of no fewer than seven different moa species, as well as other extinct birds such as aptornis and swan does suggest that the site is a very early one. Moreover, the marked similarity of the artefacts to those recovered from the well known Moahunter Maori site at Wairau Bar, it can be assumed that the earliest occupation of the two sites was roughly contemporaneous.

The adze, ornament and fish-hook types recovered from the Moa-hunter levels agree with recoveries from similar sites ranging from Houhora to Papatowai and support the hypothesis of the widespread occupation of both islands of New Zealand by a homogeneous Early Maori culture and economy agreeing with the Moa-hunter Maori of Duff (1950) or the Archaic East Polynesian of Golson (1959).

The one C14 date obtained for Paremata confirms the early status of the occupation.

In historical times there is quite well documented evidence of the occupation of the area from the time of the first European contact onwards and it can reasonably be assumed that the desirable nature of the site to a primitive society would have ensured its continuous occupation from the time of first human contact.

On the evidence of the record left in the midden from the earliest period of occupation, the site appears to have served at least the following functions:-

- (a) A food gathering place, shown by the abundance and diversity of avian, fish, shellfish and cetacean remains.
- (b) A place where food was consumed, probably over a long period, shown by the presence of several ovens and fireplaces, the greasy nature of the midden sand, the large quantities of broken bones and the thickness of the midden material layer.
- (c) Manufacture of fish-hooks. The abundance of fish-hook parts, including numerous "cores", suggests a preoccupation with, but not necessarily a specialisation in, the manufacture of fish-hooks.

- (d) Finishing and reconditioning of adzes and chisels. The recovery of adze roughouts, also the cache of three unfinished adzes and an abundance in some areas of argillite and other flakes of stone suggests that some finishing work on adzes was done here. The recovery of some small, irregularly shaped, but quite functional, chisels obviously fashioned from broken portions of larger argillite chisels or adzes indicates that there could have been a scarcity value in this locality in "imported" stone suitable for tool manufacture, and that this necessitated the reuse of any reusable, broken off portions.
- (e) The recovery of numerous flakes of adzes or chisels, with polished faces on them, some of them mere tiny fragments, was consistent with the wear and tear of tools being used at wood-working and points to this activity having been pursued here.
- (f) The heavy concentration of obsidian flakes (and to a lesser extent, other stone flakes), which were probably used for food preparation, food consumption, flaying and skinning of birds and animals, for wood-working and for bone-working, along with all the other midden evidence, are suggestive of a settled community, concerned with the daily chores of a hunting and fishing subsistence, although no doubt also concerned with a certain amount of essential "trade" - argillite, serpentine, heavy moa bone, obsidian, etc.

The obsidian flakes ranged in size from one which weighed 68.5 grams down to tiny splinters and in all, numbered several hundred flakes. Examination of the 144 largest pieces showed a source distribution as follows:-

<u>Green - probably Mayor Island</u>		<u>Smoky gray - probably Taupo</u>	
Number of pieces	113	Number of pieces	31
Aggregate weight	1075 grams	Aggregate weight	268 grams
Largest piece	49 grams	Largest piece	68.5 grams

- (g) There was nothing indicative of any agricultural interests nor was there any positive evidence of any form of permanent habitation. However, from the concentration in one smallish area of a collection of things which must have been the treasured possessions of some long-dead owner, the absence of any shell midden in that particular area, a concentration of moa eggshell fragments, and an abundance of dog droppings in that very area, there was strong inferential evidence that this particular smallish area had been a habitation site, and, more over, that the habitation had been shared with a dog.

FOOTNOTE

In reply to editorial enquiry the author states : "All my own artefacts are still in my possession. All the bones are in the National Museum. Material collected by W.C. Carkeek who has been deceased for several years, I understand was presented by him to the National Museum; I recall two very fine adzes which I hope were included in the collection. Mr J.C. Nichols has also been deceased for several years and I understand that his collection was sold. The final member of our working group, Mr K.G. Clarkson, I have not contacted for years and have been unsuccessful in recent attempts to locate him. I recall one of his items was a paua shell inlay of a composite fishhook. Any persons interested would be welcome to view and study my own collection".

1 Morrison Grove, Stokes Valley.

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