



NEW ZEALAND  
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**NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER**



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LETTER TO THE EDITORSlope lines and soils - a reply

Dear Sir,

I should like to draw your attention to two statements made by Tony Walton in recent contributions to the Newsletter.

In his paper on slope lines and ploughing methods Walton writes (1982b:126),

"Leach's claim that the ditches date from the 13th to 15th centuries (Leach, 1976:129; 1979:244) is incorrect."

In my 1976 thesis I do not made any such claim, on p.129 or at any other point. In my 1979 paper I referred on p. 244 to a trench boundary marker dating between the 13th to 15th century. I did not mean the slope lines which were contemporary with the later (post 15th century) modified soil, but the trench on the flat land garden N12/8. This predates L-3 which was considered by Karel Peters (1975:177) to be of comparable age to the 15th century modified soil of the slope, on the basis of obsidian hydration rim thicknesses and the association of a possible 1A adze of Tahanga basalt. Since Karel Peters accepts the date for clearance of the slope at 720 ± 100 years B.P. (13th century) it seems reasonable to suggest that the flat land trench boundary was dug between the 13th and 15th centuries.

In his paper on modified soils Walton (1982a:25) writes,

"Leach (1976:129; 1979:244) has argued that the spreading of gravel to a depth of 15 cm over large areas was a 19th century phenomenon. This argument is a tenuous one and at odds with the clear implication of the arguments advance in this paper."

In 1979 I wrote (p. 244), "Although it is possible that the practice of heavy gravel mulching described by Stack (1906:184-5) and Rutland (1894:221) was a 19th century phenomenon, soil modification by deliberate additions of beach sands, fine gravels and fragmented shell has now been shown to be an ancient practice in New Zealand." My comments in 1976 (p. 129) were essentially the same.

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References

- Leach, H.                    1976 Horticulture in Prehistoric New Zealand. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Otago.
- 1979 The significance of early horticulture in Palliser Bay for New Zealand prehistory. In B.F. and H. Leach (eds), Prehistoric Man in Palliser Bay, National Museum Bulletin 21.
- Peters, K.                    1975 Agricultural gardens on Moturua Island in the Bay of Islands. N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, 18:171-180.
- Walton, A.                    1982a Rethinking made soils. N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, 25:16-29.
- 1982b "Such as are seen on land that has been ploughed": slope lines and ploughing methods. N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, 25:125-131.