



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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LETTERS TO THE EDITORMuhunua West midden

Dear Sir,

In addition to my recent paper (September 1982 Newsletter) reporting the analysis of faunal material from Muhunua West Midden (N152/50) Horowhenua, I wish to record with thanks the comments of Dr Philip Houghton regarding the tooth recovered during that excavation:

"It is an upper left central incisor from a child aged about 5-6 years. It is a milk tooth, the root shows signs of resorption and the tooth probably dropped out naturally. The wear is marked, giving the sharp edge and diet must have been pretty rough." (Houghton to Butts 19.1.83).

David Butts
Hawke's Bay Museum
Napier

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Drowned pa in Lake Okataina

Dear Sir

With regard to Motuwhetero pa, Lake Okataina, could I refer readers to two papers:

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| Burrows, C.J. and
D.E. Greenland | 1979 | An analysis of the evidence for climatic change in the last thousand years: evidence from diverse natural phenomena and from instrumental records. <u>Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand</u> 9(3):321-373. |
| Healy, J. | 1975 | The gross effect of rainfall on lake levels in the Rotorua district. <u>Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand</u> 5(1):77-100. |

These papers point out that a palisade stake from the pa has been dated by radiocarbon as 200 ± 40 years B.P. (NZ 1129) giving a maximum age for the submergence for the site (Healy, 1975:95). Burrows and Greenland (1979:339) identify the date as 1650 ± 70 years A.D.

Readers may also be interested to know that similar submerged pa are identified within other lakes (also see Ken Moore, 1963

The sunken island in Lake Rotoma, Whakatane Historical Review
11(4):203-204).

Ian Lawlor
New Zealand Forest Service
Auckland

Ellesmere spit

Dear Sir,

I am prompted to take issue with a small portion of the matters discussed in the President's address 1981-82 (Newsletter, Vol 25, No 2), concerning the destruction of known but unrecorded sites on Ellesmere Spit by sand quarrying operations.

Most archaeologists are aware, for the reasons stated in the President's report, that site destruction on a large scale continues unabated despite the Historic Places Act. However, although we often learn too late about site destruction on privately owned land, surely we are not powerless to use our authority (through the Trust) and influence (through our Association) to prevent wholesale loss of unrecorded sites on public lands.

As Ellesmere Spit is managed by the Lands and Survey, the department should have a moral if not a statutory obligation to ensure that archaeological sites there are not destroyed. In turn the Trust has a responsibility to ensure that the Lands and Survey Department and the developers comply with the site protection provisions of the Historic Places Act. I can accept that there are not the resources available for a major archaeological research programme on Ellesmere Spit, but surely if "the dunes are covered with sites and they are being progressively destroyed" (as stated by the President), there is a real need for some sort of assessment survey rather than abandoning the sites in despair. If there is no one available in Canterbury to liaise with the Lands and Survey Department and the developers and undertake fieldwork (which I find hard to believe) surely the next step (if not the first) is to contact the Trust which has a statutory responsibility to deal with the situation. The obvious solution in this instance would be for the Trust to invite the Lands and Survey Department as the land managers to fund a survey of the spit to assess the resource and decide future priorities. If there is no one available in Canterbury to undertake the fieldwork I am sure the Trust can arrange for fieldworkers from outside the province to undertake the work.

It is ludicrous and unfair when we are asking some government departments and developers for large sums of money for detailed field investigations of threatened sites, whilst in areas such as Ellesmere Spit site destructive operations are being virtually ignored.

There are vast areas of public lands in some parts of New Zealand. Given that our ability to protect sites in the long term depends to a large extent on guardianship by landowners, sites in areas administered by the Crown should be some of the most secure in the country. It should be one of our priorities to persuade all provincial offices of the various land managing departments (notably the Forest Service and Lands and Survey Department) in association with the Trust to inventory and protect the sites under their jurisdiction.

Neville Ritchie
Archaeologist
N.Z. Historic Places Trust
Cromwell

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