



NEW ZEALAND  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
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## ARCHAEOLOGY IN NEW ZEALAND



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Recently it was suggested to me that I should write to you care of your periodic journal.

The subject is the Maori patu, in particular the mere or patu onewe type. A reproduction of this was made in England, in 1772, in *bronze* by Joseph Banks with the intention of using them as special trade/gift items on Cook's 2<sup>nd</sup> voyage. Banks had his name and family shield engraved upon them.

Banks didn't go out on that voyage and it is debatable if any of his bronze production went forth in the care of others. However on the 3<sup>rd</sup> voyage it is known that some number were taken out in the care of his good friend Capt. Clarke who by then had risen in rank to be on of the ship's (Discovery) commanders.

It is known that some were distributed at Nootka, Vancouver Island in 1778 - this is where I live - and a reference to one of these being observed on our north coast is what got me interested in this subject. The year of the above observance was 1787. Another was found in Washington State (USA) in 1895 - obviously from the Nootka trade with Capt. Cook's ships there.

There are a few in various venues in England - these probably never left England.

But none have been found in New Zealand and this fact leads me to write this letter. There are a few references to their observance in New Zealand. There is one of Capt. Clarke gifting one in Feb. 1777 in the Marlborough Sounds; a second reference was in the Bay of Islands where a missionary observed one in

the care of a Maori chief and a short note was written to tell of it; another reference, in the Thames area - seen in clear circumstances some years earlier; another in a Maori court case of land ( 1850s) cited one.

So somewhere in New Zealand there are examples of the Banks bronze patu production. It would be interesting to know if, where, when, any such item was discovered. This writer would be very pleased to learn of such discovery.

Yours sincerely  
Richard E. Wells  
British Columbia, Canada