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**Susan Bulmer, Garry Law and Douglas Sutton (eds), *A Lot of Spadework to be Done: Essays in Honour of Lady Aileen Fox***

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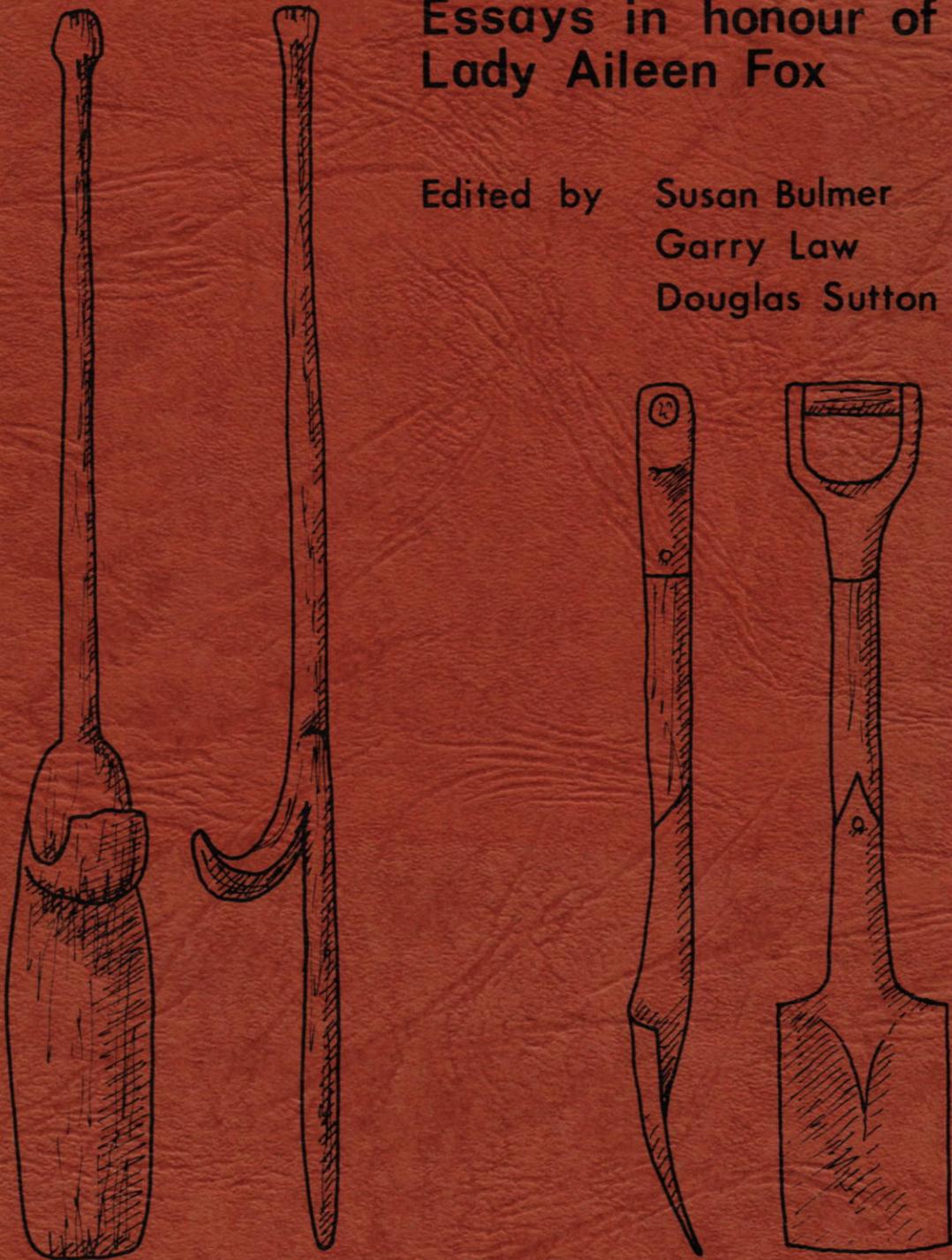
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# A LOT OF SPADEWORK TO BE DONE

Essays in honour of  
Lady Aileen Fox

Edited by Susan Bulmer  
Garry Law  
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# MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN — ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE RECORDING WITH AILEEN FOX

Mary Jeal

Napier.

I used to borrow the NZAA Newsletter from the Napier Public Library. Here I read that an archaeological 'dig' was to be conducted in Hawkes Bay. Having been initiated in New Zealand prehistory by Elizabeth Hines (nee Shaw) in Gisborne before our move to Hawkes Bay, I wrote to the Director of the proposed excavation, Lady Aileen Fox, and asked if I could be of assistance. Her warm reply generated much excitement.

In the summer of 1974, in great awe for her past reputation, I made Aileen's acquaintance. Thus began a six year working partnership and firm friendship with one whose impact in this province has been as influential as that early pioneer of archaeological site recording J.D.H. Buchanan.

The Tiromoana excavations on Bill Shaw's property at Te Awanga included students from Auckland and Otago. I was older than any of these people and younger than Aileen so I was in a unique position. And I was a 'local' if only of three year's residence.

Those two seasons, 1974-5, with all the excitement of uncovering

a large paa site, one season in brilliant sunshine, the other in wet, cold and wind, cemented the foundations of our friendship. Hawkes Bay landscape and generally brilliant summers seduced Aileen and she began her seasonal return to live in my house and site record with me.

We began our first fieldwork together in May 1973, on property adjacent to Tiromoana paa. Here I learnt that the use of Aileen's title could quickly open doors, but it could also intimidate. She gave me a list of Hawkes Bay Maori Elders I should contact before site recording.

Then in June Aileen broke her ankle. She refused to believe it was a break, compounding the fracture by walking on it for 48 hours. Following a month in hospital, home in a plaster cast Aileen remembered Bidi the American girl excavating at Tiromoana who broke her ankle on the dig, and came back to the shearer's quarters in her plaster cast and did the cooking for the team. A few months later Bill Shaw was in plaster. A Tiromoana tapu?

From 1975-January 1976, Hawkes Bay had never seen such archaeological activity. Sue Menzies worked with me, (Aileen was having great difficulty getting her ankle to function properly). Neville Ritchie and Jenny Cave worked Waimarama, Glenys Millyn and David Nevin, Waipukurau. All pushed site record numbers above the 50 I'd recently inherited as filekeeper.

"Prehistoric Maori Fortifications in the North Island of New Zealand", Aileen's first N.Z. book, came out in April 1976. It was very well received.

After two visits back to England Aileen returned in January 1977 to retire in New Zealand, living in Auckland. "There is so much to do and I'd like to site record in Hawkes Bay again" she wrote.

Auckland was to benefit from her amazing capacity for work, Hawkes Bay equally so.

A N.Z Historic Places Trust contract enabled us to investigate paa and open settlements on the hills behind Napier's old Inner Harbour. We recorded sites at Wharerangi where a proposed new development was to go, a satellite city. And we explored the northern coastal strip. Here we had our first hair-breadth escape.

The road to Aropaoanui is high, narrow and winding. That summer 1977 tall caramel-coloured grass (our car colour) concealed the sheer drops. A cattle truck and trailer thundered unseeing around a blind corner and came to stop it's huge tyres alongside the car windows. Shaken but undaunted Aileen felt she needed her stick that day not for her ankle but to steady her nerves as she clambered the 800 foot spur to record yet another paa site. This same period we were treated to a rendering on the bagpipes of "Amazing Grace" amplified 100 times by the speakers being concealed in two huge sewer pipes which stood in the farmer's cavernous living room. We couldn't hear ourselves think! Aileen returned to Auckland to begin putting together the work on carved burial chests.

In 1978, we were in the field in the Fernhill district. Sheep continuously munching led to the remark "How would you like to live perpetually on a table covered with bread and butter?"

In the triangle of land between the Tutaekuri and Ngaruroro we experienced two exhilarating moments. The first after we had recorded Moteo paa. Following the Tutaekuri river there is a craggy limestone ridge. A slumped paa lay on it's flank, we decided the crest looked likely and air photographs had been inconclusive, so up we went. Huge pillars of rock stood or lay about. I felt the nearest to Stonehenge I'd been. Black clouds were gathering as we continued our



Fig.1: Aileen Fox at Taurekareka paa, Hawkes Bay 1979.

examination of the area. Then the lightning began. Great swathes of light flashed in front, around and above us. We felt insect-small. Thunder crashed overhead. We looked at each other, and as the rain pelted down we scrambled and slid over the ridge down to the comfort of the valley below.

Gary Williams, owner of Rotokare, was personally responsible for the second thrill that summer. He is one of the growing number of farmers forced to diversify. He'd already planted half an acre of feijoas above Lake Rotokare, carefully avoiding any sites. Then around the hill paa, Oneroa, he'd put in pine seedlings. We wanted to see that they hadn't encroached; Aileen personally made sure by nipping the centre out of the closest line. And with Gary's extensive knowledge we were going to record all sites on the land.

He roared up to us on his farm bike flanked by his dogs. As he tied them up to a fence, he casually asked which one of us wanted to go first. Our jaws dropped. Neither of us are very brave so pillion-riding doesn't appeal. And Rotokare is sitewise, sharp ridges, steep spurs and broken gullies. But we went, one after another, stuck like limpets to our rider. My field notebook has a series of very shaky looking drawings. I'm sure Gary and his dogs grinned all the way back to the house.

In March 1978 Historic Places Trust agreed to run a site recording seminar at the Community College at Taradale. Jim McKinlay, Aidan Challis and some others came from Wellington. Aileen came from Auckland, staying with me in yet another spare room. We were always shifting. The course was a crash one, but thorough. Unfortunately, many who attended came from out of the district. Those who were locals, fired with enthusiasm, came out a few times with Mick and I, did a modicum on their own and then either left the country or pleaded lack of time or fitness. Aileen Fox and Mary Jeal remained the principal

site recorders in Hawkes Bay.

Meanwhile in the North, Aileen was doing 100 and one things including seeing bone caves with a Maori Elder, being interviewed for the radio programme "Checkpoint" and bringing out the Te Awanga report.

This was important to Hawkes Bay, because it made available the first large body of stratigraphically excavated data on the East Coast of the North Island. The Te Awanga Monograph is in our libraries, schools and Museum.

Preliminary work was underway for Hawkes Bay section of a Regional Prehistory.

Otatara paa the oldest and largest in the Province was administered by a Trust Board of which I was a member. We had been keen to have a few discreet signs which would interpret archaeological features for the general public. Aileen planned these and it was underway. She has never made even a private visit to Hawkes Bay without some aspect of our prehistory being worked on.

January 1979 was one of the hottest, driest summers Hawkes Bay had sweltered through. Here the title of this article most applied. For 15 days we recorded in Sahara-like country. The grass crumbled into dust on hill after hill. With a hot tape, whirring camera and sweat-soaked field notebooks we kept pushing on with temperatures of 38° celsius, while farmers were lying down behind drawn blinds. We felt we had achieved much especially with the rich archaeological landscape in the area of Valley Road in central Hawkes Bay.

Old Ohiti paa and redoubt was one of the 'nicest' sites. We came out of the field to drive to Auckland and attend the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science Congress' Archaeology sections.

The Hawkes Bay Art Gallery and Museum was beginning the traumatic juggling to find a Director to replace Jim Munro, who had guided it's affairs for the past 19 years, and was due to retire.

In May Aileen called in on her way back from Dunedin. The New Zealand Journal of Archaeology was mooted. "There is a lot of spadework to be done" but it would be a prestige publication. She was excited.

July saw Aileen staying with the Glennys who she had first come to visit in Hawkes Bay and who had introduced her to Bill Shaw. About this visit she said she was wearing her thick sweaters as they breakfasted in sunshine surrounded by hoar frost out on the terrace. A bit much to her way of thinking! And of course we, Mick acting as chauffeur, took off for Porangahau and areas of the Simcox finds which Aileen had declared the most important part of the Museum collection.

Filling the position of Hawkes Bay's Museum directorship was like the tide. It ebbed and flowed and remained vacant.

I had changed my job and saw no possibility of site recording in January. But Aileen never gives up. "Would you consider 2 week-ends and 1-2 days between Christmas and New Year?" How could I refuse. She is writing a short paper on Otatara Paa and the Maori Traditions, and borrows my air photograph.

In the winter Aileen went to Rarotonga. She wrote, "an idyllic holiday on a tropical island exactly like fiction, with coconuts, coral sand and reef. Everyone pretty prosperous - a few "remains" on the hills and lots of cultivation on the flat including the taro fields. The people are beautiful."

I went on the Archaeology Committee of the Trust. In Napier, Peggy Higgins, Chairwoman of the Planning Committee received a letter

from Aileen " I am happy to think that this will be an occasion for co-operation by the Trust, a local Authority and the Archaeology Association in site protection in the town and for a pamphlet of Archaeological sites in Hawkes Bay".

Between December 1979 and January 1980, we managed 5 field days at Horonui, Waipiropiro and Raukawa. The weather was poor but 34 sites, 15 of them paa, were recorded. Here too Aileen discovered, that crazy though I am about animals, large bulls are not included. She fearlessly took the vanguard. Imperiously waving her walking stick and saying "whoa, whoa" she led the way to that interesting open settlement. That walking stick was always getting left behind until Aileen was finally convinced she no longer needed it. We met some intriguing old landowners, one in particular we dubbed the "white knight". He was so gentlemanly, attenuated and other wordly he made us feel like Alice. One day overcome by sudden rain we took shelter in an adjacent maimai only to hurriedly vacate it as our feet sank in the ooze.

The World Scout Jamboree was hosted by Hawkes Bay in that January 1980. Of course Aileen and I were taking one of the courses. Our group included Venturers and Venturesses from Canada and Australia. We were relieved not to be called on to explain transverse or lateral ditch and scarps to any of the many other nationalities. I was delighted to nod knowingly as these "fit" young people gasped in admiration as Aileen strode up hillsides and over paa sites while they pleaded stitch or exhaustion. Did they really learn anything? They were given the preview of "Where the Spirit Calls" - the restoration of Rongopai and Manutuke Meeting Houses captured on film by the N.Z. Historic Places Trust. This they said was the best bit. But when Aileen and I went to dine with them in the Den, we were pleased to see display boards of very acceptable site record forms

and working drawings. All but one admitted that Archaeology had been their second choice but now they were quite keen on the idea. Great oaks.....

Otatara, the booklet was now in print and the signs were in place on Otatara paa, even a finger board on the roadside. It only remained for the small pamphlet, Aileen had long ago completed the archaeological features.

N.Z.A.A. book sales were soaring thanks to the sales manager. The Hawkes Bay section of the "First Thousand Years" was in the editor's hands.

The family and England took Aileen home for Christmas 1980, then she was back with me for 5 days January 1981 to extend the area around Opapa-Te Aute. Her ever present binoculars helped identify 5 different bird species, as she swept the lake margins for sites. Bird watching is one of her spare-time passions.

On Kahotea we picnicked in real summer weather and she said "Mary find me an adze". As we skirted the steep sides of the earliest paa I bent and picked up a small greywacke adze which seemed to have materialized on the hillside. Aileen refused to believe that I hadn't 'planted it!' Our first and only artefact in all those seasons.

Hawkes Bay Museum has finally got David Butts of the Archaeological fraternity as its Curator. Aileen and I plan one last field trip together "to tidy up the section we did not have time for". N.Z.H.P.T. have out, an attractive and useful and free leaflet on paa, of Aileen's composing. Her Bone Chests book is with the printer. She has taken her sister and her husband, visiting from England, over parts of New Zealand which have been her home for many more years than she intended.

What have I learnt from Aileen Fox? First a work method. Go home, where ever that may be, from the field. Before you sleep, do all your day's site record forms and drawings in the rough. Analyse the day's recording. It never fails. Keep all your senses alert, but keep an open mind.

Aileen has always impressed me with her ability, her flair, to think herself back into the prehistoric landscape and to publish her work. Although it will never be agreed to by everybody, at least there is material to argue about or a theory to refute. She has made New Zealand archaeologists look to their laurels. Her working drive is an example to us all.

I've enjoyed our fine time together Aileen.