



NEW ZEALAND
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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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Kiri Island - European trade items dating between 1816 and 1860 A.D.. Thus we have placed in the Kiri Island Aspect of the Early European Maori Phase, the sites of Kiri Island and Oruarangi, and in the Hauraki Plains Aspect of the Classic Maori Phase the sites of Kopuarahi, Paterangi, Oruarangi and Kiri Island.

MAORI QUARRY, TAHANGA HILL, OPITO

by Elisabeth Shaw

INTRODUCTION

Mr. Hans Pos and Mr. R.W.G. Jolly have brought to the notice of the University of Auckland's Archaeological Society the existence of an extensive quarry site and fortified hill top at the southern end of Opito Bay. The hill is assigned the name of Tahanga on the inch to the mile map, and the quarry has been named after it. The writer and Mr R.W.G. Jolly have carried out more detailed investigation of the sites on this hill and as well examined more fully the recently recorded beach midden site yielding Classic type artefacts. Sites are located on Fig. I of the article by Roger Green on page 79.

TAHANGA QUARRY (Site N40/8)

Tahanga hill lies at the Eastern end of Opito Beach, Coromandel, half a mile from the shore, and reaches a height of 688'. It is roughly conical in shape with a flattened top. The quarry lies at the foot of the only large outcrop of rock, halfway up the western side of Tahanga. The two small flaking floors at the foot of this fifteen foot high outcrop of rock, and probably originating from it, are entirely covered in rock fragments, flakes and broken hammerstones. The flakes are of homogeneous fine-grained basalt, or andesitic basalt, which is heavily jointed. There are two similar outcrops of stone nearby and two areas of very small flake concentrations.

The stone piles are on the lower slopes of the hill facing seaward and generally lie sloping towards the beach. They range from twenty to sixty feet long, are approximately three to five feet high and up to twenty feet wide. The material consists of large flakes and hammerstones, beach pebbles, roughout adzes and flaked cores. Fifteen of these piles were analysed and the counts recorded. Some are partially overgrown with grass and manuka scrub. The stones are yellowish-brown in colour, and flake easily when hit with a hammerstone. The water-smoothed stones are chipped and sometimes broken in half, and several piles are entirely of these.

Early investigation by R. Jolly and P. Murdock was carried out at Tahanga Hill quarry site and the crest of the hill on July 14, 1962. In a test pit in one of the stone piles they discovered flakes of a size approximately 5" x 5", and excavated down 32" before coming to a true weathered surface. Later investigation by the writer and B. Jolly was made in February, 1963. In one stone pile, a third of the way up the hill, a square of five feet was made from the grass edge inwards, and when taken to ground level was triangular in cross-section owing to the sloping side of the heap. The top layer consisted of whole stones, 15" x 12" x 2", which decreased in size to relatively small stones further down. The stones were dry and loosely placed, but became interspersed with dry earth and later sticky clay near the ground level. Flakes, stones and roughout adzes made up the total material. From the square thirty-nine roughout adzes were taken and of the stone material it was estimated that one third was natural stone or waterworn stone and the remaining two thirds was flaked stone or flakes. In one corner of the square was an area of soft earth a foot deep containing similar material.

The roughout adzes ranged from four to ten inches in length and one and a half to four inches in breadth. They were all flaked from the same fine-grained basaltic rock, some very roughly, and one was slightly polished. It is not yet known what form or degree of completion the finished adze reached, or where it was taken to from Opito. Large flakes, cores, and boulders, presumably hammerstones and anvils, were in the flaked stone. Some weighed up to ten pounds.

TAHANGA PA (Site N40/15)

This fortified site lies at the top of Tahanga. A stone wall is banked around the outlying edge. The top area is about an acre in extent and is scattered with natural outcrops of large stones and boulders, some over eight feet in height. They are lichen-covered, not flaked, and free from any loose rubble. Possibly this may have been cleared away and tossed to the side to be arranged as the rudimentary wall or embankment which stands on the steeply-sloping hill-face as it falls away from the top. The stones in the wall are small boulders, also lichen-covered. Few have any signs of flaking, and some have been rolled down the hillside to lie scattered or in rock piles on the lower slopes. In the east and west areas of the pa are several pits covered in grass but otherwise untouched. They are the size of a house pit and are three to four feet deep in the centre.

FIRST POHUTUKAWA MIDDEN (Site N40/12)

In July, 1962 an area near Pohutukawa no. I site, at the foot of Tahanga was investigated. A barbed fish-hook made from bone was found eighteen inches under the surface and two inches in the culture layer. It is one and a half inches in length, and an inch across at the widest part. Ten inches further within the culture layer lay a small grey polished stone adze, four inches long and three inches across. The

remainder of the material consisted of one roughout adze of the Opito pattern, numerous large pieces of obsidian and one half pebble with a bluish tinge. Material was gathered the following day until the natural was reached. This included an obsidian knife and two small fireplaces which were dismantled. One consisted of eleven stones (three of which were large flakes) and the other of fourteen stones. The rest of the material was made up of shells, flakes, and obsidian flakes.

HEADLAND PA (Site N40/15)

The headland PA lies on a promontory at the easternmost end of Opito Beach and is joined to the main beach by a narrow crest of land between Opito Beach and Crayfish Bay. It is judged to be several hundred feet long and perhaps a hundred feet high. No accurate measurements have yet been made. Its sides slope steeply and smoothly to jagged rocks at sea-level. A small path runs through the yellow grass and thistle along the side to the end of the headland and is littered with tiny fragments of black obsidian. Four large and deep pits lie at the far end which is almost a razor-back. The more obvious feature, and one which is visible from some distance, is a deep V notched into the top, halfway along. It is about twelve feet deep and five feet in width at the bottom. An ideal PA site for defence purposes, its steepness and narrow width make it unsuitable for any detailed investigation.

SITE SURVEY: PONUI ISLAND

JANET DAVIDSON

Following a visit to Ponui Island to inspect the site reported elsewhere in this issue (9) two days were spent in locating and recording sites in the vicinity. This was not a planned project but rather an attempt to make the most of an unexpected opportunity to visit one of the lesser known off-shore islands. However the field evidence on the island proved so extensive and so interesting that a preliminary report seems justified.

Ponui is an island in the Hauraki Gulf between the much larger Waiheke Island, and the mainland at Kawakawa. It covers an area of approximately 4,700 acres, most of which is hilly, the highest point being 567' above sea level. There is very little flat land, the largest flat area being at Motunau Bay, at the south end of the island, where the excavations took place.

The method followed in the field was the rather unsophisticated one of walking over as much land as possible in the time available, after preliminary consultation with the farmer, who was able to direct us to all the pa sites, but not to the smaller pit and terrace sites. As much of the island is scrub covered, the use of aerial photographs, had they