



NEW ZEALAND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
NEWSLETTER

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Editor: R.J. Scarlett, Canterbury Museum, Rolleston Ave, Christchurch 1.

Dear Fellow-Members,

Apologies for the delay in producing this number. With most of our staff, I have been transferring material from the old wing to the new in our Museum, and that leaves little time for writing.

Conference was a great success, and most of this number will deal with it. Book reviews, hints on digging, etc have been held for later numbers. I still welcome news and comments.

The Editor.

The 2nd Annual Conference of our Association was held in the Otago Museum from 21-24 May. After registration and morning tea, Dr R.A. Falla spoke on the Habits, Distribution and Ecology of the Moa and Contemporary Bird Fauna. He said that the traditional idea that the Maori had no first-hand knowledge of the moa did not impress him. "Indeed, the Moa's extinction was possibly connection with the impact of Polynesian man." He believed that the moa was derived from flying ancestors, and did not necessarily walk across landbridges, now sunken, to reach New Zealand. The opinions of the out-door practical men among the early writers on New Zealand archaeological matters impressed him more than the theories of academic pundits. Moa and Kiwi both carried an unusual amount of body fat and a feast of Moa must have resembled that of a "roast ox more than a giant barbecue chicken." The Maori may well have domesticated the Moa, perhaps catching them at the nesting season and "coralling" them. An old Maori in the North Island had once said Moas looked like peacocks. This was not as ridiculous as it seemed because the Dominion Museum had found that the non-coloured portions of peacock feathers resembled Moa plumage more closely than those of other birds did. Moas had similarities in structure, but several genera

had differences so marked that they may indicate separate ancestors. (Your Editor agrees with this. He had independently come to the same conclusion, and said so in a paper at another Conference last year.)

Dr Falla then read a paper by Dr. C.A. Fleming, Some Thoughts on the Extinction of the Moas, in which Dr Fleming stated "Moas apparently arose about 75 million years ago, became diversified into two families and half-a-dozen genera, and apparently ceased to change in fundamental characters by at least twelve million years ago." Moas had survived the violent climatic and the consequential vegetational changes which began a million years ago (beginning of the Pleistocene) and continued until about twelve thousand years ago, and were abundant during the post-glacial period, c.12,000-1000 A.D. The extinction of the moa was paralleled by the extinction in Australia, of giant marsupials, in South America of ungulates, ground sloths and glytodonts, and in North America, of tapirs, camels and horses. He was satisfied to attribute the extinction of the Moa to the direct and indirect influence of the first man in New Zealand.

Unfortunately, Dr W. Harris was unable to be present to give his paper in Pollen Analysis. Mr J. T. Holloway spoke on Post-Pleistocene Climates: the Forest Record, showing how climatic changes could be traced by survival forests, where all the trees were old ones, and by buried forests. There appeared to have been several marked changes in climate in the last few thousand years, and Otago and Southland a few hundred years ago were much warmer than they are now.

Dr R.S. Duff's paper on The Moa-Hunter Stage distinguished between the Moa-hunter, Classic or Fleet Maori and the Chatham Island Moriori; periods in the Polynesian culture of New Zealand, and the typical artifacts, camp-sites, etc which distinguish the Moa-hunter period.

Mr V. Fisher's paper was on "The Classic Maori Culture of the 18th Century". He said his remarks applied to the North Island only and defined the classic period as c.1750 A.D. to the coming of the Europeans. The first settlements would have been coastal, where there was a plentiful supply of fish, etc., and land suitable for agriculture could be found. The movement inland which took place later would largely be along river routes. Mr Fisher dealt with the question of dwellings during this

period. Cook, Angas, Dieffenbach, etc did not give much detailed information. Dieffenbach spoke of houses 40' x 20', with a door 1'6" square, with lofty roof, but sides of little more than 2' high. Crozet in the 1790's estimated whares to be 7'-8' x 5'-6', with larger ones for the chiefs. Yate, in the late 1820's to early 1830's saw the best houses 16'x10', with a verandah front. They were 5'-6' high. Other dwellings were smaller. Thompson, in the mid-1850's gave inside measurements as 16' long, with sides 4', window and door 2'6"x2'6", and a 6' ridge-pole. Such a house held five sleeping persons. He also delt with weapons - Matorahanga suggested that the houroa was an ancient weapon. It, and other weapons, were featured in the taniwha legends - agriculture and agricultural tools, ornaments of greenstone, etc.

Mr Lockerbie followed with the Culture Sequence in the Murihiku Area of the South Island. He said the evidence seemed to show that the Moa-hunter Maori arrived in South Otago before 1200 A.D. when the climate was as warm there as in the Bay of Plenty now. This would dispose of Dr Buck's objection that some strong inducement would be needed to lure the Moa-hunter across Cook Strait to the inhospitable South. There were local differences in the Moa-hunter culture - e.g. at Pounaweia and Shag River there were many drill-points, which were not found at Papatowai, but the general sequence was the same at all. Some radio-carbon dates, taken at various levels at the different sites were given, e.g. Papatowai 1186, 1496, 1566, 1646. Dinornis was dated 1496 A.D. Pounaweia; 1145, 1455, 1665, Hina Hina 1215, and inland at Hawkesburn 1505 A.D. All these dates were \pm about 40 - 80 years. We find that Moa-hunting continued as a way of life in southern coastal districts at least from the 12th century A.D. until about the 15th century. In the Papatowai district it continued a little longer. The Moa-hunter stages were characterised by (a) a diet principally of Moa, with some seal, whale, fish and shore birds, but relatively few shell-fish (b) large flake knives of quartzite and jasperoid, slate knives, a wide variety of adzes, etc. About the beginning of the 16th century, Moas were becoming scarce, and the diet changed to principally shellfish and fish. Flake knives were much scarcer, and usually smaller, at this level. About the beginning of the 18th century many of those

sites, no longer suitable now that the Moa was not available, were abandoned. By 1766 fish and small birds provided most of the food, and no Moas were hunted. Fish-hooks, sinkers, hammers and small flakes were the main artefacts at this level. The traditional arrival of "northerners" could also have disturbed the settlements about this time. The 17th-18th century period was not yet satisfactorily known archaeologically, but Murdering Beach had a settlement, much disturbed by early fossickers and greenstone dealers, of the early 19th century. This culture was different from the Moa-hunters', but as earlier they had occupied Murdering Beach, it might be possible to bridge the gap by excavation.

All seven genera of Moas were surviving in Murihiku when the first Polynesians arrived there. Some sites had a depth of 9', with definite stratification, and some underlay a level occupied by the recent Maori. The barbed fish-hook was shown to be an early feature of Polynesian culture, ante-dating the "classical" Maori.

The next paper was a short one by Dr G. Blake-Palmer on A Coastal Moa-hunter site near Seacliff. This small site had yielded a part pelvis of Dinornis, a tibia and other fragments of Emeus crassus, and a flake knife. It was largely sea-eroded.

Mr J. Golson's paper was on From Moa-hunter to Maori in the North Island of New Zealand, and was concerned largely with the evolution and distribution of adze-types, illustrated with excellent slides.

Then Professor D.S. Coombs, in The Use of Petrology in Delimiting the Sources of the Stone Materials of the Moa-hunter, gave some of the results of his study of stone artefacts from Pounaweia. There was difficulty in identifying correctly the rocks by inspection in the field, colour being the least important factor. Positive identifications could be made by microscopic study, but this involved removing flakes or cores from artefacts.

The rocks from which this group of artefacts were derived could have been found, respectively, locally at Pounaweia, in the Fiordland-West Southland area, Bluff-Orepuki area, Central Otago, coastal Dunedin, and Moeraki. Obsidian was probably derived from Mayor Island, Bay of Plenty. (In the discussion, several mainland North Island sources of obsidian were mentioned.)

What we archaeologists loosely call "quartzite"

and "jasperoid" were actually silica-cemented quartz sandstones and baked mudstone, partially fused by spontaneous combustion of coal seams in northern Southland and Central Otago.

Mr W. Phillips gave a short paper on Obsidian Artefacts, Maori and pre-Maori. This was the first complete paper on this subject. He reviewed the various references to obsidian in New Zealand literature, noting particularly the former use of a saw-like implement, the wata katete, with obsidian flakes replacing the shark's teeth as used in a maripi tuatini. Discussing the various types of obsidian, he emphasised their importance as barter objects from the earliest days of Polynesian settlement. Wairau was a possible trading centre, strategically placed at the southern entrance of Cook Strait. He demonstrated the lithified facies of the typical glassy "pitch-stone" and obsidian artefacts.

Mr G.L. Adkin, in conjunction with Mr B. Palmer, presented papers on Sites of Moa-hunter Affiliations in the Wellington District and their Geological Correlations.

Mr Adkin claimed that man had been in New Zealand, at least at Horowhenua since 300 B.C. He based his conclusion on a geochronological study of the coastal lowlands at Horowhenua. At the rate of about 2' per year, this had slowly extended westward. Midden remains of 3 distinct ages had been found in this area. Past possible fluctuation in the rate of advance of the shoreline would alter this dating only slightly. An earlier initial date would put the advent of human beings back too far. A later date, which would not exceed 200 years, at the most, would bring it to 100 B.C. He favoured 300 B.C. as the date, as geological considerations were unfavourable to a shoreline advance in excess of 2' per year. The initial incoming of people at the North Island extremity may have been a century or two earlier. Mr Adkin did not favour the use of the terms "Moa-hunter" and "Maori" to distinguish the two cultures. He believed that there were "Waitaha" and "Ngati-Mamoa" peoples, both Moa-hunting, and "Fleet-Maori".

Mr Palmer described the sites around the Wellington district which he had visited or had knowledge of, and the types of adzes recovered from each, with statistical listing. They were mainly Moa-hunter types, and, with the exception that the side-hafted adze was not present, had much the same range as the Wairau Bar Moa-hunter camp.

The following paper by Mr H.C. McCully (unfortunately in hospital) was read on The Age of Man in New Zealand, based largely on Mr McCully's research in the Timaru area, Waitaki Mouth, and McKenzie Country.

The final paper was by Dr H.D. Skinner, on New Zealand Pre-history in its Pacific Setting. Reviewing the evidence from sea-going vessels, fishing gear, adzes, harpoons, patu, and slate knives (ulu, the Eskimo term, was used by Dr Skinner and seems a convenient name for this type of knife) he gave short shrift to Hayerdahl's theory of the American Indian origin of the Pacific population.

Hayerdahl had quoted him as saying that the patu of the Maori was related to that of the N.W. American coast, and had stated categorically that no patu were found in East Asia. Dr Skinner showed slides of patu from Taiwan, the Chinese mainland, Hawaii, Easter Island and Maccim River. The patu is distinguished from the club by the sharp distal edge for jabbing in close combat, and has a firm, comfortable grip, often perforated for the wrist-thong. Oceania was fertile in clubs that looked like patu, but where the stroke was given by the side, not the end.

There is no archaeological evidence for any pre-European culture in New Zealand but that of the Polynesian Maori. The oldest form of Polynesian culture in New Zealand was also present, with the exception of some elements, in the Chatham Islands. Apart from these elements "Mori material culture and the material culture of the southern Moa-hunters are virtually identical."

He believed the proto-Polynesians came from Indonesia, with the Philippines as a more probable source than the southerly or western Indonesian areas. Language and folklore, admittedly tenuous evidence, support this belief.

Some implements, e.g. the ulu, appeared to have originated in the Arctic corridor, and spread southward along both the North American and East Asiatic coastal areas. Over much of Polynesia, ulu were not recorded. Where pearl shell was the only material available to make them, it would deteriorate rapidly. They were found in N.Z. (Otago north to the Hurunui) and in New Caledonia in very similar forms. Obsidian forms had been found on D'Urville Island and Queen Charlotte Sound.

Unfortunately, stratigraphical archaeology in Polynesia was of small extent, which made taxonomic work of great importance.

The Arctic culture was found in Scandinavia north to Greenland, and adzes, as distinct from axes, were found there, and were probably invented in forests east of the Baltic. The need for sledge runners, houses, etc. would cause the adze to spread, but in Egypt, etc. there was not the same need for dressed timber.

Space does not permit coverage of the excellent discussions which followed the various papers; sometimes, e.g., after Mr Adkin's controversial 300 B.C. dating for man in New Zealand, body-blows were given and returned with great gusto.

A conversazione arranged by the Otago Museum on Tuesday evening was a great success and enjoyed by all present.

Various private gatherings also took place, while Conference was on. Two notable ones which your editor attended were an evening with Dr & Mrs Skinner as host and hostess, and a "get together" of "Golson's Gang", many of whom were at the Conference, at which Sue Hirsch sang delightful calypsos, adding a touch of social anthropology.

The Otago Daily Times gave the Conference excellent coverage, and the Editor and Reporter deserve our thanks.

After the Conference, the Annual General Meeting was held, and the new Constitution adopted. Election of officers resulted as follows:-

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| President: | Mr Vic Fisher |
| Vice-Presidents: | Mr Les Lockerbie & Dr R.S. Duff. |
| Secretary: | Mr Jack Golson |
| Treasurer: | Mr Wal. Ambrose |
| Council: | Miss Sue Davis, Messrs Jim Eyles, G. Leslie, Adkin, Bruce Palmer and Ron Scarlett. |

By the time this is published, Jack Golson should be enjoying himself and working hard in Tonga, where Wal. Ambrose will join him for a few weeks. Mr Selwyn Hovell, who had been for some months digging on the estate of Miss Philippa Hamilton, extended his

operations to Moa-bone Point Cave, Redcliffs, and excavated much valuable material, in June. Alexander McKay and another, in the 1870's dug part of this cave under the supervision of Julius von Haast, and Jim Eyles ran a trial trench a few years ago. The Canterbury Museum has long been aware of the necessity of finishing the excavation in the cave, but lack of time and men has caused it to be postponed. The remaining undug portion, with the cooperation of the owner, has been reserved for excavation by the members of the Association. Owing to public interest aroused by Mr Hovell's work, and the cave's vulnerability, the finishing of the excavation by a trained team, in order to obtain stratification, etc. is necessary, and members of our Association who are free in January are hereby invited to join our team to do the job.

Meanwhile, Mr Hovell is continuing digging in the middens (Moa-hunter) outside the cave, where von Haast dug in the 1870's, and Elliott Dawson and your editor also did some excavation a few years ago. Jim Eyles kindly invited the Association to a dig at Wairau Bar, but I think Jim will understand the reasons, now that Redcliffs is urgent, for postponing this site until later.

Mr Lockerbie, unfortunately, had several weeks in bed with a very bad dose of 'flu, immediately after Conference. To Les, to Dr. Skinner, and to the ladies who looked after the indispensable morning and afternoon teas so ably, all delegates owe their thanks.

Mr H.S. McCully reports an interesting carved proximal end of a ko and other objects found in a swamp near Temuka.